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ABSTRACT

Responding to a need among Pacific Northwest schools for assistance in changing their literacy programs, this paper presents case studies of 2 schools that were part of the Equity in Early Literacy Development program, which supported the schools in moving from individual classroom literacy innovations to schoolwide practices consistent with current understandings of language and literacy development. The paper first outlines the components of the program--school teams participate in a summer institute and individual tailoring for each specific program being foremost. The first case study, "A Team Approach to Student-Centered Literacy Instruction: A Case Study of Cherry Valley School, Polson, Montana," discusses some lessons learned--that literacy program improvements are an on-going process, and that more training in child development is necessary to raise teachers' expectations for student learning. The second case study in the paper, "District Involvement in the Change Process: A Case Study of the McMinnville, Oregon, School District," describes: (1) the amount and impact of district-level support for school improvement plans; (2) relationship between individual schools' efforts and the district's work on alternative literacy assessment; (3) balance achieved between schools' autonomy and the district's leadership in overall literacy improvement; and (4) the impact of Oregon's school reform law on the district and school literacy program improvement agenda. Appended to the first case study are a status report form, a survey instrument, learning materials, and program guidelines; appended to the second case study are learner outcomes, timelines, and a status report form. (RS)

THE Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

PROGRAM REPORT

BUILDING EQUITY IN EARLY LITERACY: TWO CASE STUDIES ON IMPROVING THE SCHOOL LITERACY PROGRAM

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October 1995

Literacy, Language, and Communication Program

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THE EQUITY IN EARLY LITERACY DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Responding to a need among Pacific Northwest schools for assistance in making changes in their literacy programs, the Literacy, Language and Communication Program (LLCP) of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) designed a five-year school improvement project, Equity in Early Literacy Development. Funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) from 1990 to 1995, the project used a capacity-building model to support schools in moving from individual classroom literacy innovations to schoolwide practices consistent with current understandings of language and literacy development. The project aimed at helping schools extend positive classroom innovations, such as literature-based reading instruction or thematically organized teaching, toward a goal of a coherent, schoolwide literacy program.

Schools sent teams consisting of the principal and two to four teachers to a residential summer institute that provided workshops on literacy improvement topics as well as facilitated team-planning sessions. Central to the institute experience was the design by each team of a School Literacy Improvement Plan (SLIP), tailored to their school's literacy needs and specifying literacy program improvement goals and support strategies. The process of developing the SLIP was collaborative and resulted in members taking shared responsibility for its accomplishment. Carrying the team-building process from the institute back to their schools, participants introduced the SLIP to the rest of the staff. Over the course of the project, additional staff became part of the team moving the literacy program improvement plan forward.

Following the summer institute, project schools continued their involvement in the regional network and participated in follow-up activities, including site visits from project staff and project gatherings at regional professional meetings. Schools teams also collaborated with project staff to make presentations at such meetings in which they reflected on their experience with the team approach to literacy program improvement. A semiannual newsletter, published by project staff, kept participating schools apprised of literacy program developments in the other project schools; it also informed participants of regional opportunities for relevant staff development and of new literacy resources for educators. Project staff received information on schools' progress with their SLIPs from fall and spring process status reports (PSRs) as well as from telephone contacts and site visits.

Three summer institutes were held: One in Canby, Oregon, in 1992; one in Spokane, Washington, in 1993; and one in Dillon, Montana, in 1994. A total of 136 teachers and administrators from 36 schools participated, representing all five states in the NWREL service region (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington).

A Team Approach to Student-Centered Literacy Instruction:

A Case Study of Cherry Valley School, Polson, Montana

INTRODUCTION

Cherry Valley School is located in Polson, Montana, a small, rural community on the Flathead Indian Reservation and on the southern tip of Flathead Lake in the western part of the state. Although the district is growing, with newcomers to the state accounting for a large part of the increase, the economy remains depressed, with Polson being the fourth highest recipient of free and reduced-price lunch moneys in the state.

Cherry Valley School currently serves all of the kindergartners and half of the first-, second- and third-graders in the district. Linderman School enrolls all of the fourth-grade students and the remaining first-, second- and third-graders. Prior to the 1991-92 school year, two third grades also had been housed at Cherry Valley. As the elementary population increased, however, the entire third grade was shifted to Linderman. As will be discussed later in this paper, recent decisions by the school board have changed the grade ranges of the schools, with significant implications for the school literacy improvement process in which Cherry Valley has been involved since 1992.

In 1989, the Cherry Valley staff developed successful experiential learning activities organized around the theme of the Montana Centennial. By 1992, teachers and students were engaged in many more forms of experiential learning and had expanded their themes to include multicultural topics. Although teachers were pleased with students' excitement about reading and writing in experiential, inviting contexts, they were worried that some essential skills were not being taught. Specifically, they were concerned that some required worksheets and skills checks were not being completed. In the spring of 1992, principal Elaine Meeks invited applications from teachers at Cherry Valley to form a team and participate in the NWREL summer institute, "Building Equity in Early Literacy: A Team Approach." She felt, and the staff who responded agreed, that the Institute would help them resolve the tensions they were feeling between the increasing use of student-centered, thematic approaches to literacy learning and the required skill instruction and assessment of the adopted reading program.

Although the third grade had already moved to Linderman, Meeks felt a staff member from the upper school should be included on the team to ensure continuity in the district's elementary literacy program. For this reason, Dorothy Hancock, a third-grade teacher formerly at Cherry Valley and now at Linderman, joined the team.

This case study looks at the literacy program improvements undertaken by Cherry Valley staff since their attendance at the summer institute. It also examines the impact of Cherry Valley's growing separation from Linderman in literacy philosophy, practices, and assessment. Features of Cherry Valley's literacy improvement experience to be described include:

- Impact of Cherry Valley's original focus on developmentally appropriate practice on the literacy program
- Expansion of the school's literacy agenda to include the community

- Role of the Literacy Leadership Team in achieving original SLIP goals and setting new ones
- Impact on the literacy improvement process of (1) district reorganization of the elementary schools and (2) district participation in the Mission Valley Curriculum Consortium

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

The SLIP designed by the Cherry Valley team at the summer institute had two goals: (1) reach building-level consensus on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), and (2) develop a comprehensive plan for implementation of thematic units. This first goal seems to have been a pivotal one for the school and its community. As teachers read about and discussed elements of DAP, they looked at their own classrooms with new eyes. Over time, the lens that DAP provided on children's literacy learning showed them many ways to do a better job of nurturing overall learning. As Elaine Meeks commented, "Literacy transcends the language arts program; it is the whole learning context."

The following chart chronicles developments in Cherry Valley's literacy improvement process. Significant processes, activities, and documents will be described in later sections of this report.

Literacy Program Improvement Timeline

1991-92	Staff implements thematic teaching while retaining prescribed basal reading curriculum.
	Team of principal, four Cherry Valley teachers, and one Linderman teacher attends summer institute.
1992-93	Reading volunteers program instituted.
	Improvement focus is on developmentally appropriate practice.
	Drafts of primary education philosophy and language arts rationale are developed by team, circulated for revision, and approved by staff.
	"Celebrate Literacy Week" is held in spring; includes a community open house.
	Cherry Valley principal and Linderman teacher present capstone talk to summer institute.
1993-94	Team and project staff member conduct a presentation at Montana State

Reading Conference.

Two Reading Recovery teachers are trained and implement the program.

New improvement focus is assessment.

Kootenai language is added to kindergarten and sign language to first grade.

Home-school link with literacy program is initiated.

Polson Partnership Project begins.

Literacy fair is held.

1994-95 Partnership Project Services Fair is held.

Centralized reading resource library is created.

Literacy program survey is conducted.

Literacy Program Guidelines are developed from survey results.

Cherry Valley Literacy News publishes teachers' ideas on supporting children's literacy development.

Expanded literacy fair is held.

Take-home book bags sewn for all first-graders.

Report card is revised.

Cherry Valley organizes and district sponsors Richard C. Owen Summer Institute, Literacy Learning in the Classroom.

Expanding the Vision

The Cherry Valley team returned to school with a desire to involve more staff members in learning about DAP and to reach agreement on the essential characteristics of a primary program faithful to its tenets. Teachers took part in reading study groups, discussing information on child-centered instruction in such professional resources as Regie Routman's *Invitations*.. In October, 1992 the teachers union voted to "work to the rule," that is fulfill only their stipulated contract obligations, until the district and the union settled on a new contract. This meant that teachers did not engage in voluntary

professional commitments, such as after school reading and study groups. However, Cherry Valley staff continued to read and discuss ways to develop more appropriate learning settings for young children. By spring of 1993, the Literacy Leadership Team (a slightly expanded version of the Summer Institute Team) had drafted, and revised with staff suggestions a "Primary Education Philosophy" and Language Arts rationale. The complete documents are in Appendix A. Some essential elements of DAP set forth in the documents include:

- Learning as the construction of knowledge
- Children's own experience as the basis of their learning
- The importance of active engagement and social interaction for learning
- Choice as an important component of the primary curriculum
- The parallels between oral language development and literacy development
- Meaning and purpose as fundamental to literacy learning

SLIP Process Expands Original Goals

The Literacy Leadership team met regularly--24 times--during the first year of Cherry Valley's involvement in the project. As they delved further into the implications of student-centered learning and other aspects of DAP, they broadened the original focus of literacy program improvement to include multiage classrooms, alternative assessment, and flexible grouping for instruction. For example, the language arts rationale developed during the year called for "a developmental model of continuous progress to accommodate all children." Clearly, staff were ready to learn how to organize literacy instruction, select materials, and evaluate progress in appropriate ways. As Elaine Meeks and Dorothy Hancock explained in their presentation to the 1993 summer institute, the "process of change took on a life of its own."

Community outreach. Cherry Valley's commitment to developing a child-centered learning environment led to interest in involving the community in the life of the school. Specifically, the school invited community members into the classroom as reading volunteers. With an understanding that literacy develops in the same supportive, interactive context as oral language, first- and second-grade teachers welcomed additional adults who would share the reading experience with emergent readers. The goal of the program was not that the volunteers would teach reading skills, but rather that they would provide more experiences in enjoyable reading for students just beginning their literacy journey. Children selected the book they wanted to work with in their weekly one-to-one session with a community volunteer; depending on the need, the volunteer either listened as the child read or read the book to the child. Said one volunteer of the program's value: "We take reading out of the classroom and make it something to enjoy. It's definitely teaching, but my experience is sitting down, reading and enjoying, rather than trying to work through words. I think it's been very successful."

During the three years of the project most classrooms have increased their use of community reading volunteers, to the point that the "reading visitor" is an established part

of classroom life. In May 1995 when I visited Cherry Valley, I became a handy substitute for one first-grade reading volunteer who was absent. The eagerness with which the children grabbed a book and lined up to share it with me--a total stranger--was clear evidence of their pleasure in reading with adults. Some chose a book they could read to me; others picked one they wanted me to read. But in that classroom of 20 children, at least 12 were lined up, clutching books, waiting for a turn in the "big chair" within seconds of the teacher's announcement that I would be the day's guest reader.

Supporting families. At the 1993 summer institute, Elaine Meeks reported on the impact of focusing on developmentally appropriate practice at Cherry Valley to date:

> We're learning to take our children where they are and build on what they know. We're reversing our thinking about children having deficits--we're looking at what kinds of opportunities we need to provide for our students. When we really approach instruction through a holistic view of the child, we can't separate the child from the family. All needs must be addressed, including human services.

She went on to describe the Polson Early Intervention Partnership Program, a school-based family support program designed to lessen the cultural discontinuity many families, especially Native American ones, experienced between home and school. (The brochure for the project is contained in Appendix B.)

Now in its third cycle of funding from the Montana Board of Crime Control, the project is housed in a building on the Cherry Valley campus and contracts with a licensed clinical social worker who serves as program director. Elaine Meeks serves as project administrator. Originally funded as an innovative school practice to reduce the risk of substance abuse among children, over the three years of its life, the Polson Partnership Project has evolved to more broadly support children and their families. It includes several components: a family resource center, teacher education, student services, a home resource specialist, and cultural activities.

The project director, Co Carew, is Native American. She and Elaine Meeks described the evolution of the project, its relationship to Cherry Valley's original SLIP goals, and their hopes for its future development. Early efforts to involve poor and especially Native American parents in their children's education had not been successful, and teachers became increasingly aware of the impossibility of providing an engaging educational experience for children with unmet human service needs. To learn well, a child needs not only a developmentally appropriate school setting, but also a healthy, safe, and stable home environment as well. The Polson Partnership Project emphasizes early intervention, creating a positive link between school and home even before the child enters school. Its activities and interventions are based on the specific needs of the families of the Cherry Valley community. Services are provided based on a voluntary interview with parents of children entering kindergarten as well as an early identification screening of the child to determine any special needs.

The full range of project services are available to all Cherry Valley students and their families. As Carew and Meeks note, though a large percentage of the families served are Native American, the common denominator for disenfranchised families in the community is poverty. By providing integrated human services; bringing these families into close, supportive contact with the school; and raising teachers' awareness of the cultural discontinuity experienced in schools by many children, the project increases the chance for students at risk to succeed at Cherry Valley. The project maintains extensive documentation of parent involvement and improved student outcomes and can show that children who have received ongoing services are showing better attendance, behavior, and academic performance.

The Polson Partnership Project seems a natural outgrowth of Cherry Valley's focus on making the school student-centered. While the literacy program was the original context for putting the student at the center, as staff began to see the home/school relationship as an essential element of the child's literacy development, they were willing to look outside the classroom to see necessary supports for the young learner. Co Carew describes her growing understanding of the school and the family as systems and of the importance of those systems interacting positively.

In the summer of 1995, the Polson Partnership Project was awarded a three-year grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust. The project will use grant funds to add a parent enrichment coordinator and a student self-esteem mentor, thus continuing and expanding its work to support families in the school community.

Meeting children's needs in holistic literacy settings. While most classrooms at Cherry Valley were still organized in single-age grade groups, teachers were learning about the benefits to students of learning in multiage groups. The school began to experiment with buddy activities (age-different classes pairing up for regular literacy activities); cross-grade teaching teams in which first- and second-grade teachers planned together but kept their own classes; and, in one case, a teacher staying with her kindergarten class through first grade. In addition, the staff planned schoolwide literacy events, including a week-long literacy fair, which brought children together across grades.

Thinking about the social context of children's learning is a key feature of developmentally appropriate practice. Cherry Valley teachers explored the benefits to students of working with a larger age range than a traditional classroom offered, and they appreciated the reinforcement that multiage groups gave to their commitment to look at what children know and can do, not what skills they lack.

Still, teachers were aware of the need for some children to have more direct support in learning to read. Isolating children from each other through fixed ability grouping was no longer appropriate and teachers had largely stopped organizing for reading instruction with traditional basal groups. A solution to the problem of meeting struggling readers' needs while maintaining strong social bonds in the classroom was found in Reading

Recovery. In the second year of Cherry Valley's project involvement, two Reading Recovery teachers were trained and began working with the lowest performing students in the first grade.

Reading Recovery was seen as an appropriate intervention for the weakest readers because it approaches reading with the student at the center of the meaning-making process. Its goal is to help students become strategic readers, using all the cueing systems to handle increasingly difficult text. In contrast to isolated work on phonics skills--often the remedial help offered to struggling readers--Reading Recovery gives one-to-one intensive instruction that extends the best holistic classroom reading instruction. It thus reduces instructional discontinuity for the children who can least afford it and supports Cherry Valley's goal of providing student-centered learning.

The Team Approach Extends Support for Improving the Literacy Program

From the beginning of their involvement in the project, Cherry Valley has taken the team approach to heart. Over the past three years, the Literacy Leadership Team has included almost every teacher in the school. Principal Elaine Meeks provides continuity, and original team members Pam McCrumb, Debra Hogenson, and Mary Larson have stayed on the team for one to two years. This was the group that shepherded the primary education philosophy and language arts rationale through the drafting, revising, and adoption process with the whole staff.

Reviewing and revising goals. The team has consistently used the semiannual process status review (PSR) as a time to reflect on their progress with the SLIP and consider modifications to it. (See Appendix C for a sample PSR form.) At the end of the first year, they reported that the process of developing the philosophy and rationale taught them to "respect everyone's point of view, but don't give up on the vision."

By the 1993-94 school year, the reconstituted Literacy Leadership Team saw a new area to target, building on the work accomplished with DAP and thematic teaching. It was time to look at the expectations set for students' learning, and the way in which students' progress in reading and writing was monitored. A shift began to occur, away from fixed grade-level standards and toward a continuum of literacy learning. As teachers looked at individual students' growth on this continuum, they sought ways to support every child's learning to his or her highest potential. A number of instructional and assessment developments flowed from this perspective. The implementation of multiage teaching and Reading Recovery occurred at this time. Additional goals were integrating science and language arts, learning about observational assessment in reading, and learning more about children's literature.

During the second year of the project, Meeks noted that the team approach, already so successful in moving literacy instruction forward, was a key element in planning and operating the Polson Partnership Project. As principal of the school and administrator of the Partnership Project, she cultivated teamwork in both settings.

At the end of the second year, the team reported successful staff development experiences in alternative literacy assessment and increased teacher understanding of ongoing reading assessment, thanks to the presence of two Reading Recovery teachers. They were becoming key literacy resources to their colleagues. For the 1994-95 year, the team set twin goals of increased parent involvement in the literacy program and development of more appropriate literacy assessments. The path from developmentally appropriate practice and thematic instruction in their original goals to these new areas is clear: DAP looks at both the school and the family system to provide a congruent literacy experience for the child, and thematic teaching calls for assessment that goes beyond skill testing.

Teachers saw the Literacy Leadership Team as a learning experience as well as a force that shaped the school's literacy goals. One of the benefits of rotating membership was that increasing numbers of teachers could learn from each other and share the results of their experiments with new materials and teaching strategies. In a May 1995 meeting with the principal and 10 past and current members of the team, Mary Davis, a first-grade teacher, noted the importance of being able to move at her own pace. She said she had worked hard to incorporate more writing, especially journals, into her classroom and was pleased with the changes she saw. Barbara Holzman, a Reading Recovery teacher, said that "an exciting part of the process is that we are learners as well as teachers . . . I had to rethink a lot of my ideas about how children learn and how I teach."

Assessing the changes and developing literacy program guidelines. By the 1994-95 school year, the team decided to focus on self-assessment, literally finding out what was working well in the literacy program and what still needed attention. The superintendent attended a meeting in which the team led the faculty through a process of identifying successes and challenges remaining in the SLIP. The group identified a number of successes: the effectiveness of the team process for literacy improvement throughout the school, children's enjoyment of reading and writing, teachers' enhanced understanding of children's development as readers, Reading Recovery as a program addition, Native American students' greater sense of belonging in the classroom community, and increased variety and quality of literature in the classrooms. They identified several remaining challenges, including matching literacy assessment to literacy program changes; providing consistent handwriting instruction; ensuring the necessary planning time for a student-centered, literature-based curriculum; procuring materials to support such a program; and increasing parent involvement in the literacy program.

There was a sense of urgency in clarifying the goals and practices of the Cherry Valley literacy program. The school board had decided to deal with the population increase by reorganizing Cherry Valley and Linderman, ultimately with both containing grades one through four, and Cherry Valley retaining the kindergarten. The changes in instruction, materials, and assessment at Cherry Valley had not been paralleled at Linderman, despite the original plans to ensure continuity between the schools' literacy programs. In fact, some Linderman teachers expressed concern that incoming third-graders lacked necessary reading and writing skills. Cherry Valley's shift toward continuous progress reporting

seemed to be bumping up against some of Linderman's grade-level expectations. Whatever the case, there did appear to be a discontinuity between the literacy programs at the two schools.

Teachers responded in great detail to a literacy program survey developed by the team (see Appendix D). They provided information on materials and practices in their literacy program, including incorporation of phonics and types of grouping and assessment strategies used. The team used the responses and expanded on them to develop a statement, *Literacy Program Guidelines for Cherry Valley School* (see Appendix E). Like the earlier documents on primary education philosophy and language arts rationale, this statement went out for review in draft form and was revised accordingly. The final version of the *Guidelines* addressed the roles of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in literacy development, describing appropriate classroom strategies and assessment approaches for each component. Recommended instruction and assessment in all components reflected a view of literacy as language: purposeful, best learned in meaningful contexts, and acquired in a social setting with increasing control exerted by the learner.

Realizing the Vision: Literacy Practices and Products

I had visited Cherry Valley School in October 1993 before attending a Montana Reading Conference as part of a panel presentation with the team. At that time, the range of philosophies about literacy was reflected in the variety of materials and instructional practices in evidence. Meaning-based practices such as "the morning news," (teachers writing students' oral statements about yesterday's activities and plans for that day on the board for a shared reading experience); centers for exploratory learning; and regular independent reading in books of students' own choice were evident in some rooms. But in others, children received instruction in isolated phonics and "composed" by copying a short statement written on the board and adding their own picture. Rooms and the halls displayed student work and attractive teacher-made bulletin boards with seasonal themes.

Returning to the school in May 1995, I felt as if I had stepped into a life-sized pop-up book. "Wall stories" composed by different primary classes took me on a physical reading experience as they stretched down the hallway and around the corner. In some cases the stories, in children's own words, had been typed and enlarged through computer technology; in others, children's own handwriting carried the message. I recognized the influence of favorite children's writers such as Joy Cowley and Eric Carle and enjoyed reading children's original versions of well-learned pattern books and rhyming stories. The stories wound up over classroom doorways decorated to announce the classroom's favorite book. (Each classroom determined its favorite by a vote) The colorful and inviting room doors beckoned me to come in to Charlotte's world (*Charlotte's Web*), Clifford's (*Clifford, the Big Red Dog*), or into the world of any number of appealing characters from children's literature.

How had the school become such a showcase for literacy? I was reminded of Elaine Meeks' comment, quoted earlier, that "Literacy transcends the language arts program: it's the whole learning context." And I remembered her description of the literacy change process at Cherry Valley "taking on a life of its own" largely because it was a collective effort.

Putting Theory into Practice

Teachers, like children, construct their own meanings, building on their own experience as they interact with new ideas and texts. Reading professional resources on reading and writing development sparked teachers' own efforts to incorporate holistic literacy practices in their classrooms. Still, they had to overcome some fears and some complacency. As Mary Davis said of the changes she has made:

> It's been frustrating at times to step out of a program that I was really used to and had taught in for so many years . . . I've taken it slow--one thing at a time, incorporated that and worked on some other things, while keeping some of the things I feel real strongly about.

Davis echoed many teachers' feelings when she asserted the need for making changes in the literacy program in ways that make both the teacher and the children feel comfortable. Although there were no recipes to follow, excellent models of shared and guided reading and writing were available, such as those provided by Regie Routman and others.

Almost all classrooms increased their use of children's literature, especially with teachers regularly reading quality literature aloud to the students. A natural culmination of Cherry Valley's commitment to literacy during the first year of the project was "Celebrate Literacy Week," collaboratively planned by the staff under the leadership of the Literacy Leadership Team. Community members came in to be guest readers in classrooms, storytellers entertained mixed-grade groupings, and classrooms chose their favorite book and decorated their door to represent it. The highlight of the week was a total school assembly in the auditorium in which the whole school voted for its favorite book. This event was preceded by campaigns on behalf of "book candidates" and had the children on their feet voicing their choice as the finalists were announced.

By the end of the first year of the project, the school had replaced its current basal reading program with *Pegasus*, a thematically organized, literature-based reading program developed by Carol Santa and teachers in Montana's Kalispell School District and published by Kendall Hunt. Teachers at Cherry Valley had actually piloted some of the series components and saw it as a good transitional tool as they moved completely to a literature-based program. The need for quality classroom materials was heightened as the school abandoned its pull-out Chapter I program in favor of an inclusion model, more in line with developmentally appropriate practice.

Sharing Literacy Processes and Products with Parents

"Show, don't tell" is a familiar reminder to beginning writers, urging them to create the scene and all its physical sensations for the reader, avoiding abstractions that distance the reader from the topic. In the same way, as Elaine Meeks explained:

> One of the things that we've been cognizant of here is not to start saying to our parents, 'Now we're a whole-language school,' or anything like that. Do it. Show parents what you're doing, giving them information; don't label it. Frankly, the response that we've gotten from our parents is that they've been really excited about what they're seeing with their kids' reading and writing. There's been some concern at times, at least initially when we stopped buying workbooks, about why they weren't coming home, but all the teachers made a real effort to explain to the parents, 'You may not see as many papers coming home because we're doing things in a different way.'

Traveling books. An example of "showing, not telling" with children's work is in the traveling books that have become a staple of many Cherry Valley classrooms, thanks to the arrival in the 1994-95 school year of Doug Crosby, a native New Zealander experienced as a primary teacher there. Classrooms decide to make a traveling book, with each child contributing a page on a shared topic, or producing original pages to make a new version of a favorite classroom book, for example *A House Is a House for Me.* The book is bound and the covers laminated. Enclosed at the end are two important additions: a brief explanation on developmental spelling (see Appendix F) and a comment sheet for parents to use in responding to the book. As Crosby describes it:

> Think about a worksheet--it might take 10 or 15 minutes to fill out a worksheet and it will get thrown away or hung up on the fridge. Take a traveling book. It might take an hour to make it. Each child might read it with their mom and dad for 10 minutes. It comes back to the classroom, becomes part of the classroom library and is read during the day, and at the end of the year, [becomes] part of the school library. How many hours of reading and enjoyment is that book giving to kids?

A comment from a parent in Crosby's first-grade class responds to the January traveling book: "We look forward to every traveling book, and you surprise us continually with your sophisticated styles. There is so much talent in this group." It's safe to say that whatever anxiety parents might have initially about "incorrect spelling" in children's stories fades as they consult the developmental spelling page in each traveling book, noting the progress their own child--and the other children--are making in conventional spelling as well as complexity of writing. Another feature of the traveling book is its collaborative development; it's notable that parents often comment proudly about everyone's growth--not just their own child's.

Purchasing decisions have been made with the school's literacy program improvement goals in mind. For example, Cherry Valley now has a laminator and a comb binder to support the extensive bookmaking in the primary classrooms. Child-friendly computer technology is a big part of the program, too. Thanks to a word processing and drawing program called "Kid Pix," children can write and illustrate stories at the computer. On the day I visited in May 1995, first-graders Matthew and Brynn brought Meeks the story they'd just completed on the library computer (see Appendix G).

The literacy fair. The first year of Cherry Valley's literacy improvement project culminated in "Celebrate Literacy Week," described earlier in this case study. While community members were invited to participate as guest readers and an evening open house exhibited the children's work, the celebration lacked an educational component for parents. By the 1994-95 school year, however, the Literacy Leadership Team wanted a way to both celebrate children's literacy accomplishments and educate the community about Cherry Valley's approach to literacy instruction. In March they held a literacy fair, open to the community for a full day and evening. The school auditorium became a literacy demonstration area, where visitors could see teachers and children engaged in various activities--silent reading, journal writing with "Kid Pix," and guided reading. Visitors could also view a videotape, made by Doug Crosby and his teaching aide Brian Cook, of first-graders receiving reading strategy instruction. Parents could see how children were learning to use all the cueing systems as readers, developing much more robust strategies than "sounding it out." Additional videotapes offered a glimpse of public television's *Reading Rainbow* and a parent reading to children at home.

An important part of the literacy fair was the package of materials prepared for parents, explaining Cherry Valley's instructional program and offering advice on supporting children's growth as readers and writers at home. Appendix H contains excerpts from *Cherry Valley Literacy News,* whose purpose is explained in a note on its cover, which read, "This collection of articles written by Cherry Valley Staff outlines some of the ways in which we as a staff and you as parents can help children become confident, capable, independent readers and writers." In Appendix I is a handout titled "Reading Strategies." Also written by teachers, it lists strategies for parents to use when a child experiences difficulty with a piece of text. One parent eagerly picked up a copy, saying ,"I came to the fair just to get this!"

As the past and current members of the Literacy Leadership Team talked about the literacy fair, it was clear they felt it accomplished both its purposes: showcasing the Cherry Valley literacy program and providing parents and community members with specific ways to support children's literacy development at home. Comments from parents and other visitors attest to its success: "Great fair-- staff did an excellent job organizing it and the children were great," one participant wrote. "What a wonderful literacy-rich environment," said another. These comments are from a special literacy fair guest book. Another guest book kept in the principal's office contains more from visitors-

-many of them teachers--who tour the school to learn more about Cherry Valley's approach to literacy. A few samples convey the positive response:

- "Wonderful school--I loved reading your halls!"
- "How wonderful it is to watch your teachers in action! The emphasis on language and reading is terrific!"
- "Many thanks for a glimpse into an exciting environment where children learn and move at the same time."

DISTRICT CHANGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON CHERRY VALLEY

The picture created of Cherry Valley is of a school community drawing ever-widening circles of change around a commitment to developmentally appropriate practices for primary-age children. We can trace a clear path from this beginning point to greater involvement and education of the community, multiage groupings, thematic teaching, and development of documents articulating the school's literacy philosophy and practices. With nearly all of the staff voluntarily rotating onto the Literacy Leadership Team over the three-year project, the energy is sustained for assessing progress on goals and setting new ones; the team sees projects such as the literacy practices survey and the literacy program guidelines developed from it through to completion.

But Cherry Valley's students leave for third grade, moving to Linderman. Despite the original plan to ensure continuity of literacy instruction at the two schools, the teamwork begun at the summer institute has continued only at Cherry Valley. Certainly, for Dorothy Hancock, the sole Linderman member of the original team, the task of generating school support for the team's SLIP was much more difficult than it was for the Cherry Valley teachers and principal. And while principal Dave Weld of Linderman feels the changes advocated in the SLIP were better for children than many skill-based practices currently in use, he noted in an interview that some Linderman staff were critical of some of the changes happening at Cherry Valley. A major point of disagreement was noted earlier: third-grade teachers' criticism that Cherry Valley students were deficient in their knowledge of phonics, writing conventions (punctuation and capitalization), and spelling. It was partly in response to these concerns that the Cherry Valley Literacy Leadership Team surveyed the staff in November 1994 to determine how literacy instruction was conducted in the classrooms.

Currently, changes in the district's plans for elementary school organization have heightened the tension between the schools.

Reorganization of Polson's Elementary Schools

By the 1994-95 school year, Cherry Valley had a K-2 enrollment of 400, and Linderman had a total of 231 students in grades three and four. With expectations of a continued increase in school populations, the school board decided to end the long-standing practice of separate schools for kindergarten through second grade and third through fourth grade, and reorganize both schools to serve the same grade levels. In the 1994-95 school year, Linderman added three second- grade classrooms. The long-term goal is for both schools to contain grades one through four, with Cherry Valley retaining the full kindergarten population. In fall of 1995, Cherry Valley is adding three third grades and Linderman is adding three firsts. When in 1995 Cherry Valley adds three fourth grades, the reorganization will be complete.

At Cherry Valley, the staff are generally pleased with the planned change and are looking forward to carrying their literacy program through the additional two years of elementary school. At Linderman, feelings seem to be more mixed. As Dorothy Hancock explains it, some Linderman teachers want to reinstate more skills-based literacy instruction, in effect preparing students from the beginning with the skills teachers value for entry into third grade (spelling, punctuation, phonics, etc.). Other teachers are concerned that the school will lose its strong upper-elementary focus, and that the addition of primary students will create too great a range of abilities and needs to be well served. Some worry about the negative impact on struggling third-grade readers when capable primary students are in the same school.

The philosophical differences between the schools have made faculty transfers problematic as well. Mary Larson, who leaves Cherry Valley to teach a first grade at Linderman, said she will miss the involvement in projects such as the literacy fair and the shared literacy philosophy with other teachers. While teachers moving to Linderman from Cherry Valley presumably will bring a student-centered perspective, it is important to realize that the receptivity to change so evident at Cherry Valley has not been in evidence at Linderman. Ironically, the sweeping changes at Cherry Valley seem to have put Linderman on the defensive, even causing some teachers there to embrace the status quo and stake a claim for Linderman as Polson's "traditional school."

The potential for a philosophical split on literacy between the two schools is very strong. School board members, who made the decision to reorganize the schools, seem unaware of the points of conflict between the schools on how to best prepare students as readers and writers. In fact, only one board member attended the Cherry Valley literacy fair, despite formal invitations from the staff and personally written invitations from Doug Crosby's first-grade class. Had they attended, they could have seen Cherry Valley's student-centered literacy philosophy in action. They might also have seen a need to support teachers at both schools during the coming major reorganization.

It is clear that communication channels between the two schools need to be opened and a sense of shared purpose developed. Superintendent Jake Block, who came to the district

in 1994, spoke about this, noting that the literacy improvement process should have been districtwide, possibly with full summer institute teams from both schools and definitely with resources allocated at both Linderman and Cherry Valley to support agreed-upon changes. While it is true that the building is the unit of school change, the unique grade arrangements in Polson's elementary schools called for a coherent K-4 process; as it is, Cherry Valley has been soloing in the literacy improvement project.

Superintendent Block sees a need in Polson for staff training in children's development, and he supports school reorganization that reflects this, such as continuous progress evaluation and multiage groupings. "Looping," in which a teacher stays with a group of students for more than one year is another organizational tool he favors for its developmental appropriateness. Once teachers understand more about children's development, he asserts, they can acknowledge that children can manage much of their own learning. And while his comments implicitly support the developmentally appropriate philosophy driving the changes at Cherry Valley, he sees a need for the Cherry Valley staff to articulate to the Linderman staff what the incoming third-graders can do as readers and writers. The two groups of teachers need to develop a common language about literacy instruction and achievement.

This goal looks more possible, in the wake of the Richard C. Owen institute held in Polson in summer, 1995. The principals and a total of 33 teachers from Polson's two elementary schools took part in the institute, which involved over 200 educators. Beginning with a focus on knowing the learners and their needs, the institute developed a context for making decisions about resources and teaching strategies for literacy learning. Ongoing dialogue groups allowed the Polson teachers to interact regularly during the institute, beginning conversations about young literacy learners that may go far to bridge the gap between the two schools.

Critics of Cherry Valley's program have pointed to weaknesses in third-graders' skills as evidence that the literacy program was not preparing students adequately. Ironically, the most recent standardized test results suggest the opposite: After a worrisome three year pattern of declining scores, the Spring, 1995 Iowa Test of Basic Skills results showed Cherry Valley students consistently above both individual and school norms in reading, language, mathematics, and overall scores.

Standardized test scores are often criticized as insufficient to tell the full story of a school's instructional success, and that point could be made about the past two years of the scores at Cherry Valley. Now, when they support teachers' assertions that students are reading and writing better than with the old instructional model, a fruitful dialogue should take place in the district. One interpretation for the improved scores this year might be that teachers have internalized student-centered literacy instruction better after three years of the change process. Teachers learn to do things better with practice and support, too.

The Mission Valley Curriculum Consortium

Another district development with an impact on Cherry Valley's literacy improvement project offers some hope in the process of the schools' reorganization. In the 1994-95 school year, Polson joined two neighboring districts in a curriculum consortium, which hired a curriculum coordinator, Kay Sagmiller, to oversee a review of the districts' curriculum by subject areas. Review teams represent each of the 10 buildings in the consortium, K-12, and the curriculum coordinating committee has become a study group. As members read professional articles and reflect on their own beliefs about learning, they examine instructional practices, for example in language and literacy, to see if schools are engaging in best practices. Of particular benefit to the current impasse between Linderman and Cherry Valley is that committee members learn about practices and materials in participating schools; they develop a network that extends their knowledge beyond the walls of their own buildings.

As Kay Sagmiller described it, a big benefit of the consortium is that it diffuses historical tensions and power struggles by engaging participants in critical inquiry. She noted that the curriculum review team process, in use by the consortium, is very supportive of what needs to happen to bridge the gap between Linderman and Cherry Valley. By January 1995, the consortium had designed a professional development framework with several focus areas from which schools would choose, organizing courses and study groups in the process. Topics included society and children, teaching and learning, technology, and school as a community. Within the teaching and learning area is a description of emergent literacy and developmentally appropriate curriculum with the following reminder:

> An emergent literacy program is not anti-skills; phonics and spelling strategies are taught in context as part of an authentic literacy task. Contextualizing skills, as opposed to teaching skills in isolation, increases the relevancy of the content. Learners remember information that is relevant to them.

This would seem an excellent starting point for discussion between Linderman and Cherry Valley to end the current polarization over skills in reading and writing. Involvement of Cherry Valley and Linderman principals and teachers in the consortium bodes well for the such a dialogue, which will be essential to the district's successful reorganization of these two schools.

CONCLUSION: LESSONS LEARNED

As part of their spring 1995 process status report, the Cherry Valley team reported:

> We've learned that literacy program improvements are an on-going process that require the involvement of teachers of all grade levels, administration, support staff, and parents. We've also learned that an outside catalyst can be instrumental in moving the program forward (our new teacher from New Zealand, the

development of the Mission Valley Curriculum Consortium, a new superintendent, etc.). We are seeing that literacy transcends all learning, and what we are doing with our approach to literacy applies to all other curricular areas.

At the same time, the team noted the need to have been more proactive with the school board before misconceptions arose about Cherry Valley's literacy program, specifically the role of skills in students' literacy development. The team shares Superintendent Block's belief that more training in child development is necessary to raise teachers' expectations for student learning as well as to help teachers respond appropriately to students' needs for literacy support.

A big success for Cherry Valley ties back to its original goal of implementing developmentally appropriate practice. They wrote:

> . . . student learning is viewed as an individually evolving process and expectations are geared to the individual student rather than to arbitrary grade-level standards. Students are expected to become managers and monitors of their own learning, taking individual responsibility. All students are expected to achieve at their own highest potential. The teacher's role has become to facilitate this growth rather than to direct it in a predetermined manner."

The challenge facing Cherry Valley now is how to keep that change process--toward student-centered, meaning-based literacy learning--alive in the face of school reorganization and all its attendant developments. The lessons learned about outreach, both within the school and outside it, now need to be applied at the district level. It is time for Polson's elementary schools to learn about and from each other. The team process so well developed at Cherry Valley and now extended to the curriculum consortium may be a useful addition to Linderman.

Appendix A

Cherry Valley School

PRIMARY EDUCATION PHILOSPHY
(age range 3-8, grade range Pre - 3)

We believe learning is the process of acquiring knowledge beginning at birth and continuing through a sequence of developmental stages. Children select, interpret and integrate information about their world through social interaction and play. Meaningful, holistic, and relevant learning occurs when gender equity and cultural diversities such as ethnic, linguistic, social, religious, and economic factors are considered in designing curriculum. Student experience is central to instruction.

The school environment fosters problem solving, critical thinking, decision making and creativity by providing opportunities for choice and time for discovery learning. The primary curriculum is presented in an integrated format accomodating individual learning styles and abilities. A variety of grouping strategies are used. Flexible groupings are based on the nature of the activity and varying rates of growth and development.

Parental involvement is essential to the development of a shared vision of educational goals. School personnel, families, and the community at large have a responsibility to work together to support a positive learning experience for all students.

LANGUAGE ARTS

The primary language arts curriculum will follow a developmental model of continuous progress to accommodate all children. It is based on the following understandings:

*Literacy acquisition is a continuous, natural process.
*The development of listening and speaking processes precedes the emergence of reading and writing.
*The conditions for becoming oral language users are the same as for becoming readers and writers.
*Young children enter school with varying knowledge about and experiences with literacy.
*Becoming a reader and becoming a writer are interrelated.
*Optimal literacy environments are print-rich and promote choice, risk-taking and trust.
*Becoming literate is a social act and a search for understanding.
*Real literacy experiences have purpose and meaning for the child.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

Reducing cultural discontinuity

* Kootenai language program
* Experiential classroom cultural activities
* School and community cultural activities

Polson Partnership Project

Supporting Children and Families of the Polson Community

Cherry Valley School
Polson, MT
883-6333
883-6329

Co Carew, M.S.W.,
Program Director

Elaine Meeks, M.A.,
Project Administrator

The Polson Partnership Project is a family support program located at Cherry Valley Elementary School. The goals of the project are to ensure that all children have a positive, successful school experience and to link families with needed services.

We consider ourselves to be in partnership with families to support their education and emotional well-being.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

A central site where children and families can access needed services.

* Parent education
* Individual and family counseling
* A sense of belonging

TEACHER COLLABORATION

Improving skills and knowledge of educators working with children at risk.

* Professional development courses for educators
* Teacher Consultation

STUDENT SERVICES

Providing additional support in academic achievement and development of personal strengths

* Self-esteem mentoring program
* After School program
* Academic support

HOME RESOURCE SPECIALIST

Meeting the needs of families in their own environments.

* Parent training
* Family support
* Individualized assistance

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Equity in Early Literacy Development

PROCESS STATUS REPORT
October 1994

What would you like us to include in the fall newsletter about your school's literacy program improvement process? Please mark sections of this report, add descriptions, and/or attach news stories, fliers, announcements, etc. Thank you!

Please complete as a team and return in the enclosed envelope to Jane Braunger by *October 14.* Attach additional sheets if you need more space for your responses.

Part I focuses on the *process* of your school literacy improvement plan, that is the experiences you and other staff are going through in implementing or adapting the SLIP you designed at the Summer Institute (copy attached). **Part II** asks about the actual *changes in instruction and other programs,* either planned or already occurring, which involve students, teachers, parents, and the community.

Part I: The School Literacy Improvement *Process*

1. Is literacy program improvement an important goal in your school this year? Or have other issues or areas taken center stage?

2. Since your spring 1994 PSR, has the Summer Institute team met? Has the composition of the team changed?

3. Have you accomplished some of the goals in your SLIP? Please describe. What new goals or directions are you pursuing this year?

4. Please list any plans for staff development that have grown out of your school literacy improvement plan. Examples might include:
-*individual efforts* (e.g., taking a course, observing in a colleague's classroom)
-*group activities* (e.g., reading/study group, committee formation)
-*whole staff activities* (e.g., visiting consultant, use of staff meeting time, in-service presentation related to literacy)

5. Has your school purchased any titles in the Literacy Improvement Series for Elementary Educators (purple booklets)? If so, please comment on their usefulness. Please also tell us any topics you'd like to see addressed in new titles in the series.

Part II: The School Literacy *Program*

1. Please specify student learning outcomes you are addressing in this year's plans..

2. Are your plans to improve your literacy program designed to address equity issues, e.g., disability, ethnicity, gender, language minority? If so, in what ways?

3. Are your plans designed to address the needs of a distressed community? If so, in what ways?

In which of the following areas of your school literacy program do you plan to direct your efforts this year?

Program Area	Not in the Plan	Some Effort	Major Effort
staffing patterns (e.g., use of specialists, team teaching)			
involvement of media center & specialist in literacy program			
teacher planning (e.g., time, collaboration)			
peer coaching among teachers			
literacy curriculum documents (e.g., mission statement, framework)			
teacher research projects			
school newsletter or bulletin			
thematic instruction			
multi-age grouping			
instructional materials (e.g., trade books, computers, media)			
instructional practices (e.g., developmentally appropriate practice)			
multi-cultural literacy			
language arts integration			
curriculum integration			
grade-level literacy outcomes or literacy stage descriptors			

Program Area	Not in the Plan	Some Effort	Major Effort
student-centered curriculum (e.g., inquiry-based learning)			
parent and community involvement in literacy program (e.g., classroom volunteers, curriculum night, conferences, homework help)			
business involvement in literacy program			
superintendent and school board support for literacy program			
developing and implementing alternative literacy assessments			
communication with parents about literacy assessment			
attention to equity issues (e.g., disability, ethnicity, gender, language minority) in designing assessment and using assessment data			
other (please specify):			

Don't forget to include or mark information for the newsletter. Thanks!

LITERACY PROGRAM SURVEY
Cherry Valley School

Teacher_____

Date_____

(*The purpose of this survey is to collect information about literacy program practices at our school. There is no "right" or "wrong" answer. Please just give your descriptions in your own words of your classroom practices. This information will help us identify areas that need staff development opportunities, work toward more consistency in our practices.)

What materials are you using for reading instruction? Which do you use with your whole class? Which are used for individual and small group instruction?

Please describe the literacy activities that take place in your classroom during a typical week:

reading:

writing:

speaking/listening:

How is phonics incorporated in your reading program? What specific materials do you use?

What kinds of grouping do you use for reading instruction? On what basis are students grouped?

What methods do you use to evaluate on-going student progress?

Thank you from the Cherry Valley Literacy Leadership team

Literacy program guidelines
Cherry Valley School

The acquisition of literacy is an integrated process involving listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is a strategic activity through which the learner constructs meaning by interacting with text. Factors which influence the construction of meaning and the acquisition of reading strategies are: the interactions between teacher and student, the text, the purposes for reading and the context within which the literacy activities take place. The overall goal is to ensure that all children become able readers, writers, speakers, and listeners and are critical thinkers who can take responsibility for and direct their own lifetime of learning.

LISTENING:

As reading is a language activity, listening is promoted as a basis of literacy. Listening should be meaning-driven. Students will engage in a variety of listening experiences which will provide opportunities for the ongoing development of vocabulary building, basic concept comprehension, auditory association / identification / discrimination and other processing skills. These, in addition to experiences in developing prediction, problem solving, making inferences and sequencing are recognized as necessary prerequisites to an effective literacy program.

Assessment of progress: Teacher observation, comprehension activities (following directions, etc.)

SPEAKING:

Oral language skills are an integral component of a successful literacy program. A child's fluency in language is directly related to his/her fluency in reading. Activities aimed at promoting and developing the use of semantic (vocabulary and concepts) skills, pragmatic or social language, and good grammatic / syntactic language skills are considered crucial. Developing competence in comprehension and oral expression provide the avenue from which the child starts to build the bridge to reading and writing. With adequate listening and oral language skills in place, the child is ready to move toward applying these skills to the written symbol and its

association to sounds, words, sentences, and written language in context - its comprehension and production througn reading and writing.
Assessment of progress: Teacher observation, video / audio tapes, etc.

READING:

Students will have available to them literature of varying levels of difficulty and genre. Each class will engage all students on a daily basis in self-selected silent reading appropriate to their developmental level. Teachers will read aloud to students on a daily basis. Direct teaching of reading strategies is followed by guided and independent practice. Students will engage in silent practice before oral reading. Skills instruction will be taught in meaningful contexts, not in isolation. A variety of grouping strategies will be used for instruction (whole class, flexible small groups, partners, cooperative learning groups). Students will have opportunities for a variety of responses to literature, individually and in collaboration with others.
Assessment of progress: literature logs of books read, individual reading conferences, running records, tapes, transcriptions, or retelling of material read, teacher observation.

WRITING:

All students will have the opportunity for daily writing for a variety of purposes to a variety of audiences. Teachers will model and teach the stages of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, sharing, revising, editing, publishing). Students will be encouraged to use their writing as a natural response to literature. Spelling expectations will be developmentally appropriate. More mature writers will be assisted to check for acceptable writing conventions during the editing process. Student writing will be shared through take-home books, classroom libraries, school library.
Assessment of progress: Collection of authentic data such as writing samples, journal entries, teacher observation, story plans, individual writing conferences.

GENERAL

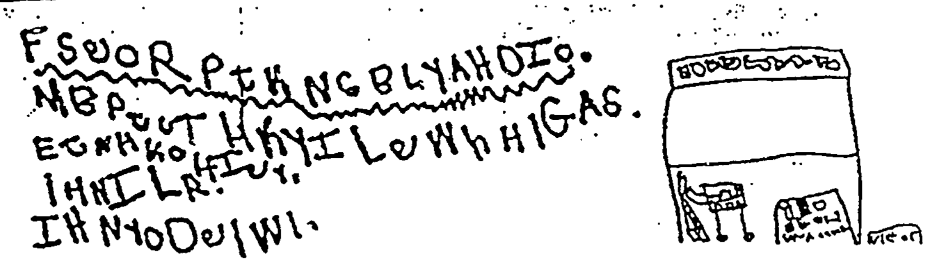
Teachers will observe and note student responses and participation during literacy instruction. Children will be assisted to make choices about what they read

and write. Students will not be labeled in terms of ability or achievement. Teachers will share in the task of communicating to parents the basis of our literacy program. Teachers will encourage parents to read to their children, discuss literature with them, and support and encourage their children's reading and writing progress. Take home reading materials will be provided to share student success and progress with parents. Teachers will participate in staff development opportunities and engage in reflective practice. A network of support and common implementation experiences is seen as an important part of the ongoing development of an effective literacy program.

Developmental Spelling

Beginnings

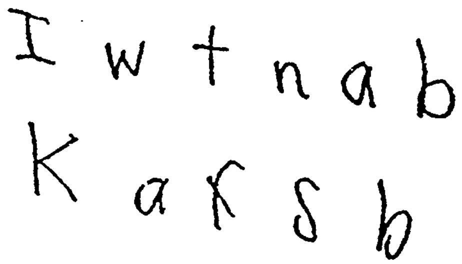
Translation:
My Mom took us to the store to get some tomato juice.



Consonants

One letter, usually the first one heard, is used to represent the word.

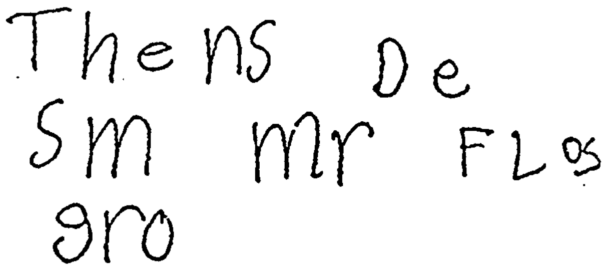
Translation:
I went out in a boat and caught a fish this big.



Initial and Final Consonants

The first and last sounds are represented.

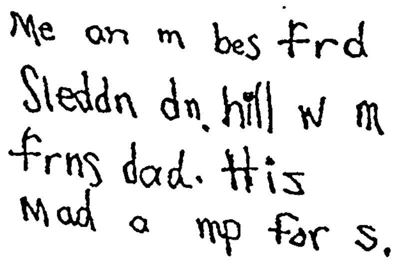
Translation:
The next day some more flowers grew.



Vowel/Consonant Combinations

Consonants and vowels start to appear in the middle of words.

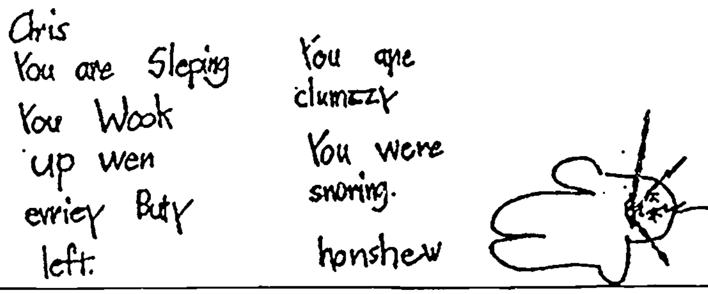
Translation:
Me and my best friend sledding downhill with my friends' Dad. His [Dad] made a jump for us.



Words

All syllables in the words are represented.

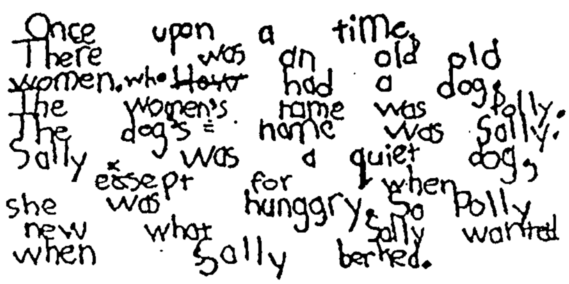
Translation:
Chris,
You were sleeping. You woke up when everybody left. You are clumsy. You were snoring. Zzzz.



Standard Spelling

Children begin to build a repertoire of spelling patterns, and add to their store of sight words.

Translation:
Once upon a time, there was an old old woman who had a dog. The woman's name was Polly. The dog's name was Sally. Sally was a quiet dog, except for when she was hungry. So Polly knew what Sally wanted when Sally barked.



Appendix G

Story and picture created with Kid Pix.

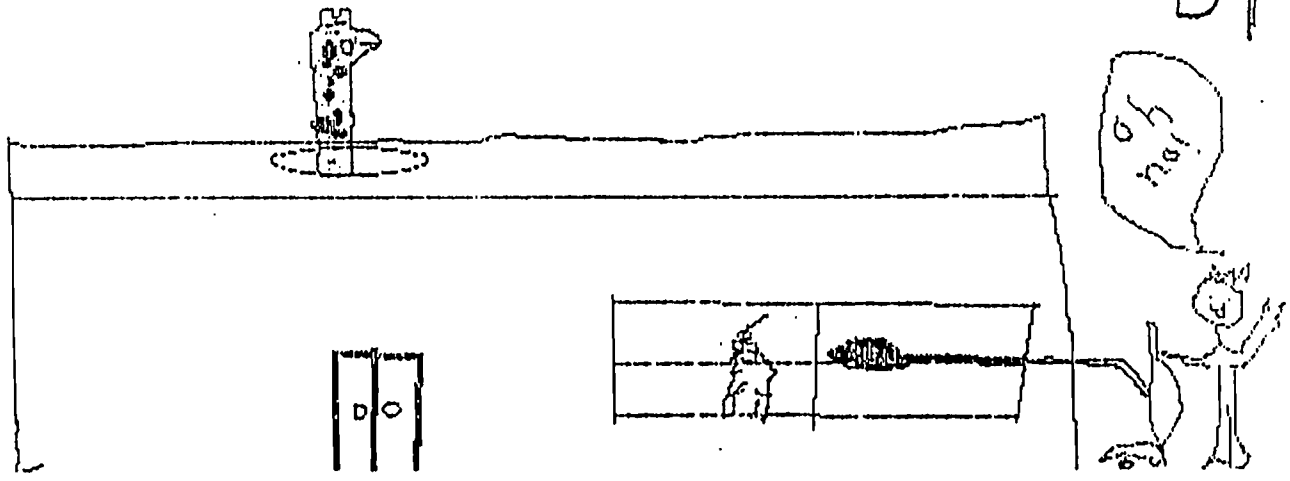
ONCE UPON A TIME IN A SCHOOL THERE WAS A WEIRD NOISE. IT SOWEND LICK A GRAFF. WAS IT A GRAFF? CERTAINLY NOT! THE SCOOL SHOCK. WAS IT A MOSTER? THAT WAS WHAT THE CHILDREN WANTED TO KNOW. A LONL TYNTAKL. SHOT THRO THE WENDO. IT GRABED MRS. MEEKS.

THE POOR JANITOR, FRANK, WAS SO EMBARASSED BECAUSE THE WEIRD SOUND AND LONG TENTICAL WAS REALLY HIS VACCUIM CLEANER GONE OUT OF CONTROL. THE END

Matthew

Brynn

Mrs B



Literacy

Literacy is defined as being literate or able to read, write and speak effectively. Children begin their journey to literacy long before entering school. When young children look at picture books and understand the "story", when they mimic adults or older siblings by scribbling on paper or when the letters in their name become known, the child is on their way to becoming literate. From these beginnings the child realizes that they can make sense of their world and gain praise from the important people in their lives.

Each child then begins school as an emerging reader and writer with their own knowledge of literacy and with great expectations of continued satisfying experiences. The purpose of reading and writing is to communicate meaning so the teacher will plan meaningful activities to reinforce the emergent skills that students bring to school. They will then seek to help children develop strategies so they will succeed in new reading, writing and speaking endeavors.

Teachers constantly demonstrate how to use strategies when they read big books, when they write classroom news,and when they read and write with small instruction groups.

An emerging reader may use pictures to gain meaning and will learn to move from left to right and top to bottom when they look at a page of text. A developing reader will use meaning and pictures and beginning and ending sounds of words. Finally a fluent reader uses the meaning of the story while cross-checking with words and the structure of the sentence.

This approach to literacy instruction is not anti-skills. In fact, phonics and spelling are important strategies that are taught in context as part of a whole, exciting, meaningful and appropriate program for the child. Each child is an individual, progressing on this journey at their own rate. Together, parents and teachers can support and celebrate as our children grow in their own ability to read, write and speak.

IF THERE IS ONE THING THAT YOU CAN DO!!

Research shows us that "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading - is reading aloud to children." It's as simple as that! It is through reading to our children that we give them a chance to develop listening, vocabulary, sentence structure, prediction and problem solving skills. These skills and strategies are the tools we use to become life long readers.

Just 15 - 20 minutes a day spent reading to your child will make the world of difference. This is not only true for young children, read to your child all the way through school. A child may be able to read very well when they are in third grade but they are also able to listen to and understand books written for much older children. By reading to these children you continue to increase their knowledge of words and the world around them.

Excerpts from Cherry Valley Literacy News

Literacy in the Preschool Setting

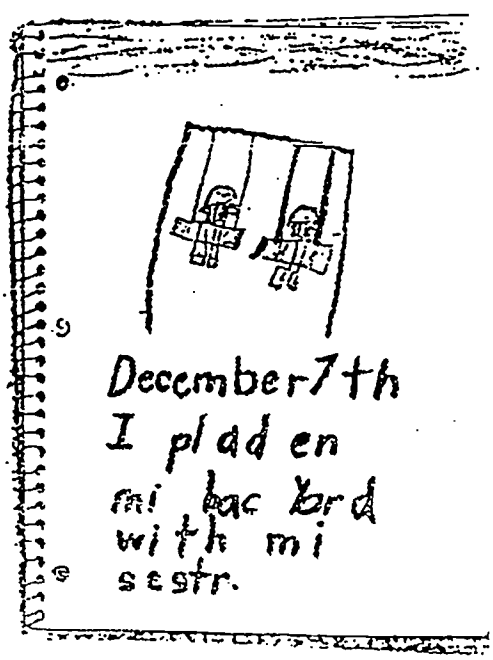
Reading in the preschool? You bet!! Cherry Valley has two preschool programs for children identified with special needs. Reading is a part of everyday activities. Children are not only listening and learning through the books we read, but are beginning to think of themselves as readers. Each day, they choose books to "read" during our reading time. The teacher reads too, modeling book concepts such as: holding the book right side up; starting at the front; looking for picture clues, where does it tell story, and how much FUN it is to read!!

The Gift

Give your child the gift of literacy. As adults we can help our children become literate by reading to them daily. Read books, signs on the street, menus, shopping lists, where ever children come into contact with print is an opportunity that should not be over looked. It is through encounters such as helping find the can that says "Tomato Soup" at the grocery store that gives print meaning to the child. Encourage them to write to loved ones even before their print can possibly make sense to anyone. You can send along a copy of what they wanted to say, just in case. Giving children the gift of understanding - what they think, they can say - what they say, they can write - what they write, they can read and share!

Journals

Journal writing is a very important part of the way we teach writing at Cherry Valley. It is through writing that children learn to write! When writing their journals children are encouraged to use their own personal experiences and write about events that have just happened or just about to happen. When children write in their journals they use a process known as developmental spelling. Typically children move from writing the first letter of the word to writing other letters they can hear and finally to the correct spelling. This process can be measured in six stages and will usually take approximately two years to complete.



READING STRATEGIES

What you can say when someone is stuck or confused.

- *do you want more time or help?*
- *what do you know that might help you?*
- *what can you do to figure that out?*
- *look at the picture and the first letter of the word.*
- *what word do you know that looks like that?*
- *what part of that word do you know? (are there any small words in the big word)*
- *skip the word and read to the end of the sentence.*
- *try that again, re-run the sentence.*
- *think about the story, does that make sense?*
- *does that look right, does it sound right?*
- *would you like me to tell you the word?*

What you can say next.

- *I liked the way you tried to figure that out.*
- *Good Job! You checked the picture and checked the word.*
- *You worked that out all by yourself.*
- *You can do it.*
- *Good try.*
- *You're thinking about the story and what would make sense.*
- *That's good reading.*
- *It's fun to listen to you read.*
- *Wow! You found the tricky part and figured it out all by yourself.*

District Involvement in the Change Process:

A Case Study of the McMinnville, Oregon, School District

INTRODUCTION

McMinnville, Oregon, presents a unique case for study in the Equity in Early Literacy Program. Located 35 miles southwest of Oregon in a rural area dotted with farms and vineyards, McMinnville is a growing community (current population 21,000) with an increasing school population (4,434 in April 1994; 4,616 in April 1995). The school district is composed of one high school, two middle schools, and six elementary schools. Indicative of the district's recent growth, the second middle school just opened in September 1994.

The first summer institute, Building Equity in Early Literacy: A Team Approach, came at an opportune time for McMinnville, since by the summer of 1992 the district had already begun to focus on improving language and literacy programs. Incoming curriculum director Colin Cameron saw the summer institute as a vehicle to solidify the focus on literacy and support each school in making appropriate literacy program improvements. He arranged for each of the six elementary schools to send a team, composed of the principal and two to four teachers. Prior to this appointment, Cameron had been principal of Memorial, the largest of McMinnville's elementary schools. He had a strong working relationship with the other elementary administrators and a shared experience of the district's literacy program improvement process to date.

The district's decision to send teams from all of the elementary schools and its subsequent involvement in their literacy program improvement efforts led to this case study's focus on the interaction between the district and individual schools in this process.

Features of the interaction to be described include:

- Amount and impact of district-level support for School Literacy Improvement Plans (SLIPs), originally developed by the school teams at the summer institute and revised over the three-year follow-up period
- Relationship between individual schools' efforts and the district's work on alternative literacy assessment
- Balance achieved between schools' autonomy and the district's leadership in overall literacy improvement
- Impact of Oregon's school reform law on the district and school literacy program improvement agenda

WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHANGE

District Support for Improved Literacy Programs

The following chart documents district-level support for elementary schools' literacy program improvement. Staff development and program improvements were also planned and carried out by individual building staffs in support of their literacy program improvement goals. Changes will be described later in the profiles of two schools. This chart illustrates the extent of district-level

support for the process. Specific components of the district involvement will be described in more detail.

District Activities to Support a Focus on Literacy

1988-1989	Staff development in teaching writing as a process is offered; instructor, a teacher on special assignment (TOSA) in the district, later became principal of one of the elementary schools.
1989-1990	Kindergarten teachers produce a statement on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP); kindergarten classrooms incorporate centers as instructional tool.
	District supports training of a Reading Recovery teacher leader.
	Teacher leader in training offers Reading Recovery at Wascher Elementary and conducts staff development with first-grade teachers on observational assessment.
1990-1991	Reading Recovery implemented in all six elementary schools.
1991-1992	District learner outcomes adopted (See Appendix A).
	Language and Literacy Task Force formed at the district level; task force produces draft of language arts course of study.
	Building Language and Literacy Teams (BLLTs) form and apply to summer institute
	Curriculum Director and teams from all six schools attend Summer Institute.
1992-1993	School teams introduce SLIP to their schools; reading/study groups organize in five of the schools.
	Districtwide inservice on meaning-based reading instruction is provided.
	District task force develops continuums in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, K-8.
	District convenes BLLTs four times for half day meetings.
	District funds half-time TOSA position in language arts and half-time Reading Recovery teacher leader.
	District sponsors year-long literacy assessment class.
	District convenes committees for summer work in three language and literacy areas: assessment, staff development, and materials; each produces a resource document.

1993-1994	District convenes BLLTs three times for half-day meetings.
	Assessment tools collection distributed to buildings.
	District funds one and a half TOSA positions in language and literacy.
	District staff (TOSAs) offer year-long class in language and literacy for the primary classroom.
	TOSAs organize monthly "Teacher Talk" on literacy topics for all elementary teachers.
	District core literature list for grades three to five developed.
	District sponsors second year-long class in literacy assessment.
	Schools work individually on implementing new literacy assessments and reporting strategies.
	District sends a team to Oregon Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (OASCD) research institute; team drafts statement on primary program philosophy and instructional components.
	Districtwide writing festival is held in May.
1994-1995	Second districtwide writing festival is held; several schools hold their own writing festival preceding it.
	Language and Literacy for the Primary Classroom cl? s offered again; staff are former TOSAs, assigned now to full-time classroom teaching.

Within the time period depicted in the table, McMinnville School District was conducting a language and literacy materials adoption, as required by Oregon law. The timeline issued by the district curriculum office noted a three-year commitment to language and literacy, beginning in 1992 (see Appendix B). It is significant for our purposes here to consider how the district's participation in the Equity in Early Literacy Development Project both provided a larger context for the required materials adoption process--overall improvement of the literacy program--and supported the process itself. The district identified the materials adoption timeline from 1992 through 1994. Continuing work with the BLLTs at district level, staff development offerings, and task force documents all fed into this process. For example, the BLLT meeting in January 1994 included a presentation on the language arts materials adoption process, describing the shift from textbook-driven to student-centered, literature-based teaching. Materials would be chosen to reflect this shift, as well as a focus on curriculum that integrates subjects, using language and literacy to learn across the curriculum.

The School Literacy Improvement Plan

Charting a Course as a School, Setting Forth Themes as a District

The culminating product of the summer institute was the SLIP, a plan written by each school team setting forth two to five school literacy improvement goals and, for each, describing specific support strategies. (See Appendix C for the SLIPs developed by Adams School and Wascher School). Teams used information from the institute workshops as well as their own sense of the literacy needs and interests of their school to craft plans to take back to their colleagues for approval and implementation. In the process of drafting and revising their SLIPs at the institute, teams received response from other teams as well as from an assigned facilitator. At the end of the institute, each participant received the full set of 15 SLIPs.

Not surprisingly, McMinnville schools produced SLIPs with some common goal areas and support strategies. Prominent among the shared goal areas were the following. (Individual schools' statements of the goal are quoted in parentheses.)

- Literacy assessment ("Explore alternative assessment of literacy"; "Research age-appropriate, ongoing literacy assessment"; "All teachers and support staff will learn appropriate language and literacy assessment tools"; "Support both learning process and product, including ongoing assessment.")
- Teacher knowledge about language and literacy ("Construct common knowledge base and philosophy about literacy"; "Develop a school-wide philosophy and model of literacy"; "Increase knowledge about the integration of literacy"; "Teachers will understand and apply knowledge about language and literacy learning and child development"; "Build upon staff awareness of literacy.")
- Literacy instruction ("Teachers develop a variety of research-based instructional models for literacy"; "Goal-implemented curriculum change"; "All teachers and support staff will learn how to instruct children in reading strategies"; "Form teacher support group to implement literacy innovations"; "Children will develop a love of reading and become effective communicators.")
- Thematic teaching/integrated curriculum ("Integrate literacy across the curriculum"; "Integrate language and literacy across the curriculum"; "Goal-implemented, integrated curriculum.")

Support Strategies to Achieve the Goals

Reading/study groups. McMinnville schools also opted for similar support strategies to accomplish their stated literacy improvement goals. Most notable--and common to all six schools--was the teacher reading/study group. In this strategy, either the entire staff or small groups of teachers chose to read and discuss a professional resource. For most McMinnville schools the groups met all year and used some staff meeting time for their discussions. The text of choice for five of the six schools was Regie Routman's *Invitations* (Heinemann, 1991). The book appealed to the school teams as a rich resource on both whole-language theory and specific classroom practices to implement it. That the book also contained many teacher-designed

materials was also seen as a plus. At Wascher, staff decided to take turns preparing selected chapters and facilitating the group's discussion on such topics as guided reading, independent reading, assessment, and writing workshop. In this way, individual interests were satisfied and the group had a shared professional reading experience.

After the first year of the project, most schools continued the reading/study groups. By the 1993-94 school year, the Equity in Early Literacy Development Project had published a five-booklet series designed for just such use. (See Appendix D for a full list of publications in the series). The individual booklets on thematic teaching and classroom-based assessment received the widest use, which is not surprising, given the common focus on curriculum integration and assessment.

Dedicated collaborative planning time. As noted above, several schools organized reading/study groups, either during staff meeting time, for example, once a month, or on a voluntary basis during after-school hours. In addition, almost all the schools created times within the school day to ensure that teachers have collaborative planning time. Given their goals to improve the shared knowledge base about language and literacy and to develop more integrated curriculum, this effort to guarantee teachers access to each other for planning and collegial learning was very important, as comments from staff and administrators alike have attested.

In two schools, the goal of providing collaborative planning time and another goal of exploring mixed-age learning experiences were ingeniously served by a plan called "Literacy Afternoons." One afternoon a month, one grade level of teachers would be freed for an extended planning period (one hour to 80 minutes). The remaining teachers and support staff worked with children organized in mixed-age groups, engaging them in literature extension activities. On all counts, the "Literacy Afternoons" were judged a huge success: Teachers appreciated the opportunity to plan with grade-level colleagues; the other teachers and the support staff had successful mixed-age literacy experiences; and students enjoyed the opportunity to work with children outside their grade level and with adults other than their teacher.

All of the schools had regularly scheduled staff meetings, usually held weekly. The teams reported that faculty and administration agreed to dedicate regular portions of this after-school, contractually obligated meeting time to monitoring and furthering the SLIP agenda. The time might be used in various ways--for a workshop with the whole staff on a relevant literacy topic, for small-group reading/study meetings, or for staff discussion and planning on some aspect of the SLIP. Examples of the last use are Adams School's discussion of results of a building survey on professional development needs and Wascher School's decision to use staff meeting time for several inservice sessions on teaching writing as a process.

Committees and task forces on specific topics. In addition to district committees formed to address specific issues, e.g., developmental continuums in language and literacy, several of the elementary schools formed committees or task forces as well. The work of these school groups varied, depending on the school's SLIP. Examples included committees on thematic teaching or integrative curriculum (Adams, Columbus), alternative assessment (Adams, Wascher, Memorial, Cook), and multiage teaching (Wascher, Memorial, Columbus).

District Leadership for Schools in the Project

The impact of the Equity in Early Literacy Development Project on McMinnville School District has two facets for study: one is the effect of all six elementary schools' participation; the other is the impact of district leadership in literacy program improvement. This latter aspect of district involvement assumed increasing importance during the three years of this case study. Colin Cameron spoke to both of these aspects of district involvement, reflecting in spring 1995 on the district's participation in the project:

> (In the spring of 1992) we had some things going, and I think we were just hearing about the word 'literacy' and all that could mean to us, and then the information came up of the workshop (summer institute). It seemed like a good fit. I think the part for me that was advantageous was a workshop that provided a forum for all the schools in a district our size to participate with assistance. . . . It was my first year in this role (curriculum director), and I think it was a good focus for us. The buildings who brought full teams and participated were the best, with a building or two that got off to a rocky start. They never had a consistency as far as their team all the way through and I think you see the effects of that in their program. It makes me really believe in our district, in our sites, that we can do a focus carried on for several years.

Supporting the SLIP Process

District BLLT meetings. The heart of the summer institute, which began McMinnville's involvement in the project, was building teams for literacy program goal setting and specific action planning. Teams of principals and teachers left the institute with their SLIP, excited about sharing their work with the rest of the staff and taking leadership responsibility for the SLIP process. In McMinnville these teams were named Building Language and Literacy Teams (BLLTs). They met regularly within their buildings and began to expand their membership, but as will be explained later, successful BLLTs usually had, what Adams principal Dick Pritchett called "a key person who stayed throughout."

To support the teams and continue the interchange of ideas across schools that had begun at the summer institute, the district convened the BLLTs four times during the 1992-93 school year and three times during 1994-95. A project participant from the Literacy, Language and Communication Program (LLCP) of NWREL attended four of these meetings, participating in the BLLT sharing and individual school planning. Unfortunately, the district budget could not support these meetings after 1995.

Over the course of the 1992-93 school year, the BLLTs shared progress as well as difficulties in accomplishing their SLIP goals. The Columbus team reported on their success in designing collaborative planning times linked to multiage literacy afternoons. (Wascher was to add this practice, with its own adaptations, in the 1993-94 school year.) The Adams team shared a problem with the reading/study group with *Invitations*. The team noted that the group meeting times were taken up with some teachers defending their current literacy instruction rather than discussing the ideas for changes that the book provided. As a result of discussion of the problem,

Adams decided to emphasize the teacher support aspect of reading/study groups more than their informational purpose. Subsequent changes in their SLIP reflected this growing awareness of the need to honor all teachers' knowledge and experience during the literacy change process. As one member of the Adams team noted, "Professional development is not a uniform issue."

An essential communication tool between the Equity in Early Literacy Schools and the project staff was the semiannual Process Status Report completed by the team and returned to the LLCP office (see Appendix E for the PSR form). Schools were regularly asked to report any changes to their literacy improvement plan and especially any shift in literacy focus areas planned for the coming year. The reports revealed varying degrees of teamwork and responsiveness regarding changes in the plan. However, in McMinnville, the regular school team meetings at the district level provided a natural context for monitoring and revising the literacy plan. At the final meeting during 1992-93, school teams shared their revised SLIPs for the coming year. In the following section, the specific changes in Adams' and Wascher's plans will be described. It should be noted that for all the schools, the revised SLIPs reflected a blend between school-determined interests and the district's focus areas as part of the language arts adoption. So, while Memorial and Columbus were planning to develop more multiage literacy experiences, and Wascher added a focus on integrated curriculum, all the schools now had a goal of improved literacy assessment.

Language and literacy TOSAs. The district's decision to dedicate TOSA positions to language and literacy support helped individual schools move along in their SLIP process and provided important district-level literacy expertise. In 1988-89 then-TOSA Kathy Cerwinske provided staff development in teaching writing as a process, laying groundwork for subsequent movement to more student-centered literacy instruction. More recently, having one and a half TOSA positions in language and literacy has meant excellent support for teachers and for district literacy goals. From 1992-94, Kathy Baird worked half-time as a TOSA and half-time as a Reading Recovery teacher leader. In 1993-94, Pam Tate worked as a full-time TOSA.

McMinnville TOSAs have provided demonstration teaching in classrooms, consulted with grade-level groups of teachers in planning instruction, and conducted workshops at school staff meetings. On the district level, they have conducted staff development classes in language and literacy for the primary grades (Language and Literacy Lab) and trained support staff in Reading Recovery techniques, enhancing literacy instruction consistency, especially for struggling readers.

District TOSAs also took lead roles in developing the language and literacy continuums, the district's collection of assessment tools, guidelines on materials choice and use, and the core literature list for grades three to five. In addition, they organized "Teacher Talk," a monthly forum for elementary teachers, specialists and principals. Rotating the meetings among the six schools, "Teacher Talk" provided opportunities for teachers to meet and talk with grade-level colleagues across the district about such topics as assessment, multiage classrooms and writing instruction. In both this setting and the Language and Literacy Lab, teachers surveyed said the greatest benefit was sharing ideas and learning from other teachers in the district.

As Colin Cameron noted, budget constraints led to the cancellation of these one and a half TOSA positions. Nevertheless, in 1994-95, the Language and Literacy Lab was still offered by the

former TOSAs, Baird now a full time Reading Recovery teacher and Tate a full-time fifth-grade teacher. Their close involvement at both the building and the district level in the literacy change process gave them important insights. One that they shared in a district-level discussion recently was the need to continue providing support for teachers in improving literacy instruction. As Baird cautioned:

> I think a lot of people have the foundation or they have the form, but we so eagerly move on to something new. We think we've got something finished, but we might still be missing something--spelling, for example. I think we're missing how to help meet individual needs, or how to support study groups. We have to go more in-depth.

To some extent, forces beyond the district's control contributed to this sense of "moving on to something new" too quickly. Oregon's newly adopted Education Act for the 21st Century had districts working to ensure that students would be prepared to demonstrate the outcomes required for the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) (see Appendix G). Of necessity, the district's focus had to broaden beyond language and literacy.

Developing alternative assessments. All of the McMinnville schools had included improved literacy assessment as one of their goals in the SLIP. To support teachers' need to learn more about alternative assessments, the district sponsored a year-long class, Matching Assessments to Language and Literacy Instruction, taught by a project staff member. The class enrolled 32 elementary teachers, with all six elementary schools represented. It was organized as a reading/study group and practicum in which teachers shared responses to professional reading and also brought in samples of assessments they were implementing in their classrooms. During the course of the year, the instructor provided classroom demonstrations of reading assessment strategies and participants visited each other's classrooms as well. Several schools, including Cook, Memorial, and Wascher, provided staff meeting time for participants to share information from the assessment class with their colleagues.

Teacher interest in alternative assessments continued into the second year of the project, so the district offered the class again, this time for a smaller group of 11 teachers, in 1993-94. It was notable, however, that this class included a teacher from the middle school and one from the high school.

During this time, teachers were experimenting with a variety of assessment strategies, and at the January 1994 district BLLT meeting, the session began with reports from the teams on assessment developments at their schools. Each school had copies of a collection of assessment tools prepared by the 1993 summer task force on assessment, as well as the newly issued continuums on reading, writing, speaking, and listening (see Appendix F). Schools were implementing a variety of alternative assessment strategies, including portfolios and observational assessments. Several were experimenting with three-way conferences for reporting to parents, in which the students either took a lead role or participated in the discussion of their progress. In addition, schools were beginning to look at changing their reporting strategies, for example, using the newly developed language and literacy continuums as a basis for revising their report cards.

Colin Cameron described this period, in retrospect, as a "window of opportunity" for schools and the districts in the context of Oregon's education reform. The state was still in the process of designing the assessments and portfolio evidence that would be used to verify learners' achievement of the newly adopted, performance-based CIM. As Cameron saw it, ambiguity from the state served the district's purposes well, allowing teachers time to experiment and learn from their efforts in assessment innovations.

It was clear during this period that the district supported a variety of assessment and reporting efforts in the schools. The commitment to treating teachers as professionals who learn through reflective practice seems to have paid off in several ways, especially in assessment. Without a top-down mandate to implement alternative assessments, teachers felt free to experiment, to participate in an assessment class or in a reading/study group on the topic. As individual classroom and school approaches to assessment have proliferated, enthusiasm about classroom-based assessment has grown.

Along with new assessment strategies, staffs have developed new reporting strategies, especially three-way conferences and revised report cards. In some cases, different report cards were being used within the same school. As Kathy Cerwinske, principal at Wascher, reported: "Every single room in my building had a different report card. I was pretty much the one to type those up and it was really interesting to see *the growth* in what they understood about assessment and how they had learned from each other" (emphasis hers).

By the end of the 1994-95 school year, a new role for the district has emerged, namely, to provide some consistency in assessment, especially for portfolios that move from one teacher to the next, and for report cards that account for both skill development and literacy experiences. Colin Cameron has organized a portfolio committee that will work during the coming school year on this task. Adams principal Dick Pritchett said of the group's first meeting this spring: "In my building, the (committee) representative came back and shared with the staff. My staff felt, 'Great! We're getting a framework and structure.'. . . We're not there yet (a district portfolio plan), but people seem to be real comfortable about classroom portfolios."

LITERACY IMPROVEMENT PROFILES ON TWO SCHOOLS

Adams and Wascher represent different school sizes (345 and 159, respectively, as of April 1995), and somewhat different populations, with Adams being somewhat more culturally and economically diverse. Analysis of their original SLIPs and ongoing process suggests some similarities relevant to this case study, however. They seem to have made progress by setting limited goals, with an emphasis on staff input into the change process, and revisiting the goals and support strategies regularly. They have also had the benefit of a stable teaching staff, with at least the principal and one member of the original team continuing in an active role in the SLIP. In contrast, for example, Newby School sent a teacher and the principal only part-time to the summer institute. Within the last year Newby has received a new principal and, as part of a district reorganization plan, gone from an enrollment of 550 to 300. Another school, Columbus, had left the institute with an extensive list of SLIP goals, but had to vacate their building in 1994-95 due to earthquake damage. In relocating to a newly constructed school, Columbus' enrollment

swelled from 195 in 1994 to 500 by spring of 1995. For these schools, other pressing issues seemed to take the focus off the literacy improvement process, even though their PSR reports indicated movement toward achieving some of their goals.

Adams Elementary School

Adams has a fairly stable population, with enrollment over the last two years remaining constant at 345. Principal Dick Pritchett had been appointed to Adams for the 1992-93 school year. His previous position was as a middle school principal in the district. Attending the summer institute with two Adams teachers was a good way for him to learn their perceptions of the school's literacy program needs and for the three of them to work as a team in planning for program improvements.

A key Adams staff member was not able to attend the summer institute, but assumed a major role in the district literacy focus. Pam Tate was a Reading Recovery teacher at Adams and had served on the 1991-92 Language and Literacy Task force. In 1992-93 she continued as a Reading Recovery teacher half-time at Adams and became a district language and literacy TOSA during her remaining hours. She worked closely with the Equity in Early Literacy Development Project staff member who taught the assessment class in McMinnville. In 1993-94 she became a full-time language and literacy TOSA, and in this role she assumed major responsibilities for districtwide staff development to support the literacy improvement process. Some of those were noted earlier in this case study. As also noted earlier, her TOSA position ended, and she returned to Adams as a fifth-grade teacher in the 1994-95 school year.

Adams' SLIP goals were: (1) construct a common knowledge base and philosophy regarding literacy, (2) develop a process to involve staff in literacy goal setting, and (3) implement literacy goals developed by staff. Planned support strategies included cross-grade discussion and reading/study groups both for improving teachers' knowledge base and for identifying literacy goals, formation of a building literacy group, and formation of teams to implement agreed-upon goals.

The Adams BLLT reported at the January 1993 meeting on the difficulties they were experiencing with their reading/study groups at this time using an earlier book by Regie Routman, *Transitions* (Heinemann, 1988). Evidently, some staff members were feeling pressured to change their classroom practice and had begun to use the reading/study group time to defend the status quo. By the May meeting of BLLTs, Adams' revised SLIP reflected a renewed sensitivity to meeting the needs of teachers at all places on the "literacy change" spectrum.

Goals and support strategies in this revised SLIP included: (1) continue to construct a common knowledge base and philosophy regarding literacy and (2) establish new reporting tools and conferencing schedules (especially student-involved or student-led conferences). Adams faculty were organized into small group-discussion teams, of eight to 10 teachers. While groups still planned to read and discuss resource materials, the focus had changed to teacher sharing and support, not just discussion of the text. The team explained that each group had at least one member who was a strong proponent of the literacy change process underway. The addition of a

goal on reporting and conferencing was especially appropriate to a teacher sharing and support focus; teachers were just beginning to try out alternative assessments, and there was growing excitement about involving students in the traditional parent-teacher progress reporting conference. Interest was high in learning how to develop students' self-assessment skills and how to organize effective three-way conferences.

Progress and plans reported at the BLLT meeting in September 1993 were positive. Staff were receiving information on implementing literacy program changes, and the reading/study groups were going well. A change in the process was paying off: Once a month a staff meeting was used for discussion groups with a whole-staff wrap-up at the end. Staff liked this shared ending to the session, and the team felt it reinforced some common concerns and commitments. Teachers were beginning to revise their assessment strategies. The January 1994 meeting showed how far Adams staff had come in rethinking assessment and reporting: All of November's parent conferences had been three-way. Some teachers involved the students to the extent that they actually led the conference; others had students participate less authoritatively, but all students were part of the reporting process. As part of their focus on improved literacy assessment, Adams teachers were engaged in learning about and using portfolios. They were beginning to express interest in district guidelines on types of entries for them.

The 1994-95 literacy goals were embedded into CIM planning, which had assumed a major focus in district planning as well. Still more work was planned on assessment, for example, training teachers in taking running records for authentic reading assessment. Classroom portfolios, already in wide use, would include student self-reflection on how chosen items demonstrate CIM outcomes. Also, the primary teachers had revised the primary progress report to reflect changes in literacy instruction and assessment. Similar revisions were under way at the intermediate level.

By the end of the 1994-95 school year, the Adams team reported new goals for the coming school year: (1) increase staff knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), (2) increase use of DAP strategies in the classroom, and (3) hold a schoolwide writing festival to lead into the district one. The team explained that this focus on DAP reflected the lesson they learned earlier in the project--that change takes time and individual teachers' knowledge and preferences must be respected. Before moving to multiage classrooms--a goal shared by many but not all of the staff--the team agreed that they needed a two-year development plan. Further, they planned not to assume that even then all staff would teach multiage classrooms.

Over the three years of the project, Adams has shared its insights into successful literacy change. Their advice for other schools is to "take baby steps" in making schoolwide changes, planning the calendar to allow gradual changes. By developing support groups on staff, they have also been able to celebrate little successes--a teaching strategy implemented, an assessment tool tried, a new conferencing format well received by parents. Adams also notes that teacher-led activities, such as support groups or reading/study groups, are very important to success. Finally, they have learned the importance of building collaborative planning time into the school schedule so that the important work of improving the school literacy program is not one more task added to teachers' already full load.

Wascher Elementary School

Wascher is the smallest of McMinnville's elementary schools with a current enrollment of 159. Principal Kathy Cerwinske had been a TOSA; she provided inservice on writing process at the beginning of the language and literacy focus districtwide. The Wascher team lost one member during the three years of the project. That was Kathy Baird, who left Wascher to serve as a Reading Recovery teacher and TOSA in 1993-94. However, in her role as Reading Recovery teacher leader and TOSA, Baird's work supported Wascher's and the district's movement toward more meaning-based literacy instruction. Kathy Cerwinske and K-1 teacher Annette DePuy continued as active members of the school team.

Wascher's SLIP goals in 1992 were: (1) all teachers and support staff will learn how to instruct children in reading strategies, (2) all teachers and support staff will learn appropriate language and literacy assessment tools (running records, reading logs, portfolios), and (3) continue peer coaching and team building as part of ongoing staff development. Support strategies they planned included reading/study groups, a needs assessment from the staff on reading as a process, and staff implementation and sharing of assessment strategies.

The team noted that their SLIP built on literacy improvement efforts had already begun, specifically with a commitment to teaching writing as a process. Staff were ready to explore the parallels--with reading as a process--and willing to take responsibility for moving the process along. So, from the beginning, Wascher had good buy-in from the staff for the plans the team had developed at the institute.

Wascher's reports at the BLLT meetings were positive. They were truly cultivating "the experts among them," with Pam Tate providing classroom demonstrations of holistic teaching strategies and Kathy Baird working with primary teachers on analyzing running records for reading assessment. In addition, staff members were leading reading/study group discussions on chapters of *Invitations*. By the second half of the year, the team reported that they'd revisited their SLIP and felt the need for more work on teaching writing as a process, so Kathy Cerwinske would offer a workshop on it in spring. Several staff members were taking the district assessment class and had time at staff meetings to share what they were learning with their colleagues. Finally, in support of growing interest in curriculum integration and thematic teaching, the team had catalogued all of the school's trade books.

The revised SLIP for 1993-94 reflected continuing goals--most notably affirming and extending teamwork--and some new areas of interest: (1) increase our knowledge base in assessment and integrated curriculum, (2) continue to learn from each other and work as a team, and (3) implement parent education in literacy and assessment. To support these goals, the teacher-led reading study groups would continue, with assessment topics as an additional focus. In addition, teachers enrolled in district classes would share information at staff meetings. Wascher was organizing "Literacy Afternoons," similar to Columbus', so this added to the collaborative planning opportunities for teachers.

The fall BLLT meeting heard from the Wascher team that all teachers and support staff had taken part in the year-long discussions of *Invitations*. Having teachers take responsibility for presenting individual chapters was very successful. Another strength in their literacy improvement plan was alternating team membership so more teachers could participate over the three years of the project. At the spring 1993 writing inservice, the staff conducted an in-building scoring of third-grade papers using direct writing assessment. By the January 1994 meeting, the team reported that most conferences were being conducted with students involved. To accommodate families--and teachers--conferences were being held throughout year. Most teachers were using portfolios, and the Literacy Afternoons were giving grade-level teachers 80 minutes of planning time together each month. Finally, team member Annette DePuy was teaching a class for parents on reading and writing development.

Wascher reported in its fall 1994 PSR that after five years of focus on literacy, they were shifting the focus to math and science, with integration of literacy, of course. They planned to work on integrating the district's new literature-based reading adoption with other areas and themes. The feeling was that literacy practices at Wascher were well embedded, as evidenced by nightly take home books, a large library of novels, class sets and reading recovery books, lots of writing, and participation in the district writing festival.

Wascher's advice on achieving schoolwide literacy program improvement was: "Stay committed! Review the goals mid-year with the staff to see what the future needs are (that's when we decided on the writing needs), and celebrate mini-steps to success." The team also saw the benefit of involving *all* staff--professional as well as support--in the reading/study groups and, later, in the literacy afternoons. Teachers and support staff felt more connected, and the support staff learned new and exciting ways to work with children on literacy. Finally, in her spring 1995 PSR, principal Kathy Cerwinske noted: "I was glad we saved assessment and portfolios for last . . . .Strategies need to happen first."

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE SLIP PROCESS

Support Forces for Change

People

In their final PSR (spring 1995) the Adams team offered this advice: "Encourage the pathfinders/leaders; don't be limited by the resisters." Even though the change process must acknowledge and address concerns of nonsupporters, focusing on the resisters can derail the progress. Principal Dick Pritchett explained further that change efforts are "more successful if we're validating what people are already seeing or doing, supporting them in continuing to move forward." In this way, team members at the summer institute didn't need to be convinced of the value of student-centered approaches to literacy; they were ready to move forward. Of course, it was important to compose teams with teachers knowledgeable about current literacy theory and eager to improve their school's literacy program.

Products

Colin Cameron spoke as both a parent and an administrator when he noted the power of children's literacy products to convince parents of the value of new ways of working with reading and writing in the classroom. Parents are delighted to receive student-made books; they see their child's reading log with responses to their reading. They notice, too, that the children can talk about what they've done and what they know. In the "old days" of worksheets and basal tests, children didn't have much to say about their work; they simply brought it home because it was finished.

Kathy Baird noted, too, that change is supported when the new ways of literacy instruction allow parents to become involved more in their child's development as a reader and writer. As a Reading Recovery teacher, she has heard often from parents that they love reading the "little books" that go home with the children. This is especially important to garnering support for holistic, student-centered literacy instruction, for the Reading Recovery students are those whose reading skills are weakest. To have their parents experience the value of "real reading" to make them stronger readers is vital. So, too, is nurturing shared reading at home as a basis for the child's lifetime love of reading.

Finally, members of the focus group spoke to the value of inviting parents into the literacy process--involving them in setting literacy goals with the student in a three-way conference, assisting students with literacy projects at home, and reading works in progress. As parents see the richness of children's reading and writing projects, they are less likely to want the limited products they were accustomed to receiving from workbooks and copying exercises. Furthermore, they are able to understand that not all work is taken to completion in final draft form (writing) or written report (reading).

Support Teachers as Learners

McMinnville team members agreed that teachers' involvement in the change process, for example, trying different assessment strategies and rewriting the report card, was important to developing new understandings and commitments. Building-based reading/study groups as well as district classes in literacy instruction and assessment served to inform and support teachers in this process.

To nurture this learning, it was important to build in time for staff development and teacher planning as part of the support strategies for SLIP. Also important was keeping a manageable change agenda. One school in the district seemed to report a whole new slate of literacy goals each year, but that kind of agenda puts teachers on a speeded-up treadmill. The focus group emphasized the importance of solidifying understandings and practices across buildings before moving on to the next challenge. For example, Dick Pritchett noted that at Adams, because teachers supported each other, the more reluctant teachers were now--after three years in the project-- trying out new strategies. They had mentors among their colleagues whom they trusted to help them learn new ways of working in their classrooms. As a result, better literacy instruction was reaching more students.

A common feature of the reading/study groups across the district was their power to "discover the experts among us." Teachers learned by taking responsibility to present information to peers--from the assessment class, the primary language and literacy class, and professional resources. These groups became a comfortable place for examining current beliefs about language and literacy and seeing if practices and materials fit these beliefs. For example, teachers saw that existing evaluation and reporting strategies left students out of the process, and yet McMinnville's learner outcomes as well as the state's CIM outcomes called for students to be self-directed learners and self-evaluators. So teachers began incorporating literacy practices that helped students make choices about reading and writing, set goals in these areas, and assess their own progress. A big value of the reading/study groups and district classes was the context they provided for reflection on new strategies in teachers' practice. To the extent that teachers felt encouraged to continue experimenting with new instructional and assessment strategies, these groups served as much a support as an information function.

The value of teachers learning by reflecting on their own practice is nowhere better illustrated in McMinnville than in the developments in assessment. The consensus of team members and district leaders was that teachers' involvement in trying out new approaches--many learned in the assessment class offered by NWREL--was an excellent way for them to learn. Tapping teachers' interest in new assessment approaches was far more effective than if the district had mandated new assessment strategies. And, as Colin Cameron noted, building on teachers' interest and supporting flexible assessment experiments in the first two years of the project created a climate in which teachers were more receptive to having some guidelines, in portfolio contents and reporting strategies, from the district level:

> The process of teachers in the buildings designing reporting forms based on the continuums, some coming up with narrative forms, has been a real inservice for them. They probably gain more from that process than if this committee (District Language and Literacy Committee) had done it and said, 'Here's the forms.' I think probably our next step in that is to take their best efforts, now that we understand that, and maybe look to standardize that, so that we do have more common language.

Cultivate a Team Approach

Schools participated in the project from the beginning--with attendance at the summer institute--as teams. This was important, according to McMinnville participants, both for the shared responsibility this gave the SLIP and for the support the team gave individual members. Also, team members modeled a collaborative process for other staff in the building. And, when new members came onto the team (a common feature of the McMinnville BLLTs), the expertise spread. Mary Ringer, Cook principal, commented that intermediate teachers at her school who'd served on the team were more advanced in meaning-based literacy instruction than their grade-level colleagues. In this way the teams also served as staff-development vehicles.

At Adams, noted Dick Pritchett, other staff noticed that team members were trying new things; this piqued teachers' interest and prompted them to ask the team about these approaches and

materials. Of course, this suggests that team members should be well-respected by their colleagues. Kathy Cerwinske suggested another benefit of the team approach as "having a team in every building so you don't feel alone, and you're working as a district." The likelihood that teachers will continue working to refine new instructional and assessment strategies is higher if they are part of a support group that is also working for change in the district.

Another important "product" of teamwork described by McMinnville participants is a locally developed philosophy of language and literacy learning, or at least shared understandings of how they both develop and the role of school experiences in literacy for children's development as readers and writers. Teachers tended to talk about why they were replacing the old ways of doing business in terms of how newer practices fit their growing understanding of language and literacy development.

Provide District-Level Support for Individual Schools

The benefits of district support for schools trying out their own assessment and reporting strategies have already been discussed. For the first two years of the project, this support for individual schools and teachers was a combination of direct service provision--the assessment class and inservice presentations--and a policy of nonintervention as schools began to experiment with portfolios, student-led conferences, and new report cards. As noted, by this third year of the project, schools were willing to support a district effort toward more consistency after a year or two of working on things at the building. The role for the district in this process is to find the delicate balance between supporting and leading.

Several key members of the literacy improvement process in the district talked about the importance of the administration's ongoing support and commitment to the task of language and literacy improvement. As the district activity timetable earlier in the paper and the documents in the appendices attest, McMinnville maintained a high commitment to its language and literacy focus, with participation in the Equity in Early Literacy Development Project as one piece of that commitment.

Build on Improved Language and Literacy Programs to Enhance the Whole Curriculum

Several participants in the project noted that as schools move the focus away from literacy program improvement, those changed literacy programs become the building blocks for improvements across the curriculum. Dick Pritchett said:

> I see a lot of our efforts are not going to be strictly language and literacy issues. I think we are going to be looking at developmentally appropriate processes across all curricular areas, and we're bringing a lot of the strategies and components that we've learned in our language and literacy focus to integrate curriculum much more. . . We're not going to have as much of a social studies unit or a science unit or a reading unit. A lot of those things are going to be put together for our planning model in components-based assessment.

And Mary Ringer of Cook noted that the work the district has done on improving the language and literacy program has provided a structure that can be adapted to fit other areas, for example, in integrating learning to meet the CIM outcomes.

For Kathy Cerwinske, the parallel in the next steps of curriculum improvement to her bailiwick--writing as a process--is clear. As teachers see that writers learn by writing, and that the process includes choice, working with different purposes and audiences, and collaboration as part of producing and revising, they can apply these understandings to other language areas--speaking, listening and writing. And they can apply the same principles of student-centered learning to other curriculum areas as well.

Stress the Connections Between Instruction and Assessment

Kathy Cerwinske reported that the Wascher team was glad that the changes in classroom literacy practices came before the assessment changes. But the change process may have been more complex, with some reciprocal cause and effect. Mary Ringer described how using portfolios helped teachers at Cook understand the need for authentic reading and writing in the classroom. Teachers in the next grade were asking colleagues to include useful student work samples and assessments in the portfolios that move to the next grade with them, for example, student writing samples, reading logs, and running records. Her example showed how teachers were calling for changes in instruction, to some extent because of assessment agreements, especially portfolios.

Kathy Baird shared a similar example on benchmark books at Newby School. As upper-grade teachers asked for more specific evidence of students' development as readers, a willingness grew to have all primary teachers take running records on "benchmark books" representing stages of reading growth. As she put it, "The portfolio really drove a pretty reluctant school to some consistency." Of course, a problem with this benchmarking is that teachers who have only a superficial understanding of meaning-based literacy instruction may use the technique, like the old basal placements, to pigeonhole students into an ability group rather than to get useful information on what kids know and can do. Nonetheless, Kathy was encouraged by the movement this shows, saying, "We've come so far from just putting kids in basals six years ago to wanting to know where each child is and what he can do."

In McMinnville, literacy assessment has been a focus in two ways: one is the documentation of students' growth as readers and writers, and the other is as a window into classroom literacy practices. By studying new assessment and reporting strategies, McMinnville teachers have had the opportunity to look at how they were using classroom time for literacy and what products students had that could rightly go into a literacy portfolio. The questions of "What do we value about reading and writing?" and "How can we show that our students are developing as readers and writers?" were foremost in teachers' minds. The district seems to have avoided a narrow preoccupation with evaluation criteria--for example, portfolio scoring rubrics--by keeping this dynamic interaction between assessment and instruction at the center of their literacy improvement process.

NEXT STEPS FOR MCMINNVILLE IN THE LITERACY IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Reporting Strategies

It is clear that it is now time to take the best efforts from teachers who have been using portfolios and other alternative assessment strategies, examine ways to standardize assessment at the district level, and move toward a "common language," as Colin Cameron phrased it. Because of teachers' involvement in changing assessment already at the building level, this district role is welcomed help in managing a portfolio program that will make sense for the whole district.

To that end, Cameron has organized a portfolio committee that will tackle this task during the coming school year. The task of providing some consistency in portfolio contents and in reporting strategies involves not only the elementary schools but now the middle schools and the high school. And Cameron notes that this next step must avoid squelching classroom and building flexibility and freedom in portfolio development. The district's interest is not in standardization but in consistency where needed to carry student assessment across grade and school levels.

Another impetus for some assessment consistency comes from parents. Mary Ringer noted that teachers were feeling a need to balance reporting of students' literacy processes and the skills they were acquiring. She said: "We have more kids reading . . . and enjoying reading . . . ,but yet parents are saying, 'OK, show me on a continuum where my kid is.'" Reporting strategies must account for both the students' engagement in reading and writing and their growth.

Parents also want to know that all the schools in the district share a commitment. Dick Pritchett noted the importance of agreed-upon student outcomes and having some confidence that their kids will learn strategies toward these outcomes regardless of which school they attend. He looked to district leadership to help ensure that literacy documents from individual schools--and, for example, new report cards--will convey a uniform philosophy of literacy and consistent strategies in the classroom.

Staff Development

Kathy Baird and Pam Tate talked about the need to keep working with teachers who may have surface features of meaning-based literacy instruction--for example, using more literature--but need more time and support to really change their instructional practices. They also need time and support to develop new understandings of how language and literacy develop, which spark renewed interest in changing classroom practices to fit them.

The McMinnville focus group agreed that the emphasis on literacy program change now needs to be at the intermediate and middle school level. They expressed confidence that the four to five years of work with primary teachers in literacy program improvement has resulted in solid understandings and congruent practices at that level.

Kathy Cerwinske gave an example of how this primary strength is already having an impact on the upper grades. She noted how upper-grade teachers may have to raise their expectations--and standards for their own instruction--because of the skills and habits children have already developed:

> This year's was one of the best first grades we've had in a long time. Annette (the first-grade teacher) and Kay (the Reading Recovery teacher) did their average test for Reading Recovery, took that score and all that information, and sat down with next year's teachers and said: 'These are the kids who are coming to you, and this is what they can do. They'd better not go backwards!'

Colin Cameron described the necessity, paradoxically linked to the difficulty, of bringing upper elementary, middle school, and high school teachers into a student-centered literacy model:

> I think the essence of what literacy is, and what it means to an individual, and the benefits of being able to control their own journey to being literate--I think a lot of our primary teachers understand that and understand how people develop that (literacy). They understand that's the best gift we can give students, the opportunity. Somehow that is the essence that would have to be transferred to other people in the middle or high school setting--not just the instructional strategy or practices the kids go through. It's just that vision and the way they perceive learning and the world. I think we lose that; it gets lost in the departments; it gets lost in 'this is mine, this is my program' type of thinking the higher up we go.

Elementary principals and teachers echoed this opinion and saw a need for district support to raise the importance of appropriate instruction in literacy and language at the middle and high school levels. They described less attention to students' development on a literacy continuum in middle school and high school than in elementary school, and envisioned a role for the district in remedying that. Still, there were instances of middle school teachers being receptive to new ways of organizing classroom literacy practices and conducting assessments. Perhaps the district's portfolio leadership will open some dialogue opportunities between elementary and middle schools. As Mary Ringer pointed out, intermediate teachers are eager to work with middle school teachers to ensure that the portfolios that come with the students to the middle school will be used by the teachers there.

CONCLUSION

Project Role in Sustaining the Literacy Change Process

At this point, more than three years into the McMinnville School District's literacy change process, an important function of the project is to articulate for a broader audience the value of the literacy program changes taking place there. Other districts and schools can be encouraged to examine their own beliefs about literacy and language development and to reflect on the appropriateness of existing instructional and assessment practices in light of those beliefs.

The experience of McMinnville schools may inspire others to work together building teams at the school and the district levels to shepherd the literacy change process. In reading the reflections in this case study, others should be able to see the many benefits of this team process: from improved instruction and assessment to enhanced teacher knowledge, to more collegial planning.

As the stakes rise for academic success, voices like those of McMinnville educators need to be heard, reminding colleagues, the community, and policymakers that "back-to-basics" is an unworthy rallying cry for educational change. When we listen to the voices of administrators and teachers in this document, we hear them urging us to move forward to more integrated ways of learning and exhibiting literacy.

Learner Outcomes:

McMinnville School District
1500 N. Baker
McMinnville, OR 97128

Effective Communicator

Routinely uses skills and demonstrates proficiency in all areas of communication including reading, writing, listening, performing, speaking, and use of mathematics. Uses a variety of communication skills for different audiences and purposes.

Involved Citizen

Evaluates the need for change and its effects on the natural environment. Understands and participates in the democratic process. Understands complex interrelationships. Analyzes global trends, patterns, and operations and makes decisions that contribute to the well-being of society.

Quality Producer

Creates intellectual, artistic, and/or practical products which reflect originality and high quality. Thinks in an innovative and creative way and feels free to take risks. Takes pride in service to others.

Collaborative Worker

Appreciates diversity in others (i.e., has respect, tolerance). Uses conflict resolution skills. Participates as a member of a group working toward a goal or solution to a problem. Demonstrates friendliness, adaptability, integrity, empathy, and politeness in group settings. Assists in the clarification and achievement of collective goals. Is sensitive to the feelings of others and has empathy that leads to actions that take the feelings of others into account.

Perceptive/Critical Thinker

Identifies, assesses, integrates, and applies information. Uses quantitative and scientific reasoning such as observing, organizing, classifying, comparing, analyzing, evaluating, applying, adapting, synthesizing, drawing inferences, reaching conclusions, making judgments and decisions.

Self-Directed Learner

Sets goals, pursues goals, and evaluates progress independently. Can access information needed to solve problems. Manages resources and takes initiative to achieve goals. Evaluates and adapts to changing circumstances. Seeks and organizes information and uses technology to gather and process information. Makes decisions based on conscious awareness of personal values, information, experiences, and anticipated consequences.

Personal Manager

Believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self. Accepts responsibility for own words and actions. Demonstrates enthusiasm for learning. Operates under an ethical code of values (i.e., integrity). Demonstrates a positive attitude toward the family unit and effective parenting skills. Assesses own state of wellness and acts on that assessment.

Language and Literacy Materials Adoption Timeline

1992

*District makes three year commitment to language and literacy
- -Language and Literacy Task Force
- -Language and Literacy Building Teams

1993

*March
- -Language and Literacy District Committees form

*June
- -Language and Literacy Materials Committee meets to develop guidelines for choosing and using materials

*September
- -Summer work is shared with principals, Building Language and Literacy Teams, and board members

*October
- -Elementary Materials Adoption Committee coordinated:

Jan Gran	Mary Ringer	Robin McClendon
Linda Christensen	Ludim Aleman	Russ Weaver
Carolyn Urnes	Kathy Cerwinske	Pam Tate
Ginny Crabtree	Colin Cameron	

- -Ask Beth Howard, Melanie Wallis, and Language person to join group
- -Attend State inservi e on materials selection criteria and preview materials on state adopted list

*November
- -Communicate adoption process to elementary principals
- -Committee members meet with their building Language and Literacy Teams to share:
  - -District Guidelines
  - -District Timeline
  - -State Criteria
  - -recommend that L&L materials be inventoried on computers
- -Committee members recommend to Building Language and Literacy Teams sharing this info. with staffs by December 1
- -Pam works with elementary people to develop core book lists

*December
- -All elementary staff members have materials adoption i nfo.:
  - -District Guidelines
  - -District Timeline
  - -State Criteria
- -Request handwriting materials from publishers on the state recommended list
- -Communicate adoption process to restructuring cabinet

1994

*January
-Revisit and refine process
-Adoption committee goes to Monmouth to review materials
(HBJ, Macmillan, Silver Burdett)
THE BIG QUESTION.....Do the materials fit our needs or not ????
-BLLT meet s at District Office
-materials adoption update
-work on plan to manage and organize classroom materials school-wide

*February
-Research handwriting adoption, using state criteria
-To provide continuity for supplemental materials develop recommended list of other trade books and materials (begin with list developed by the Language and Literacy Task Force)

*March
-Continue work on supplemental materials list
-Materials survey to classroom teachers and specialists
-list titles and authors of multiple copies of literature books in classroom
-How many?
-list teacher resource materials (Invitations, pocket chart, etc.)

*April
-Begin to plan staff development for new materials
(Several shorter times over longer period of time?)
-Report adoption recommendations to board

*May
-Continue to plan staff development
-Order materials?

*June
-Materials available to staff
-June 30—all money is spent!!!

*August ———>
-Staff development begins and continues throughout the year

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY LEARNING (*READING, WRITING, LISTENING, SPEAKING, AND THINKING*) ALLOWS STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE THROUGH THE FLEXIBLE USE OF A VARIETY OF MATERIALS.

GUIDELINES FOR DECISIONS IN CHOOSING AND USING MATERIALS:

Materials need to provide for flexible groupings (heterogeneous, interest, peer-tutoring, etc.).

Materials should help focus on the process, as well as the end product.

Materials need to provide students interaction with a variety of technology.

Materials should include works of significant literary quality.

Materials should be chosen with regard for our cultural diversity (ethnic groups, gender, roles).

Materials should offer practice for real-life tasks (reading manuals, gathering information, completing forms, etc.).

Materials should be chosen with regard to integration of subject areas.

Materials should include a balance of printed materials and technological materials. If a technological device does the same thing a book does, it may be preferred (an electronic speller/thesaurus may be preferred to a printed dictionary or thesaurus).

****Materials=fiction, non-fiction, "everyday materials" (phone books, forms, newspapers, catalogs, maps, pamphlets, etc.), hardware, software, films, audio/video aids

ADAMS SCHOOL
McMinnville, Oregon
SCHOOL LITERACY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

A. **GOALS AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES (INCLUDE DATES AND A BREAKDOWN OF SEPARATE STEPS FOR STRATEGIES IF APPROPRIATE)**

1. **First goal:** Construct common knowledge and philosophical base.

Support strategies:

* Have entire staff read Transitions

  1. Establish small cross-grade level discussion groups
  2. Staff meetings to share ideas, concerns and issues identified by discussion groups
  3. Revisit and revise "Why we need to change our educational program/process?"
  4. Establish guidelines for discussion groups
  5. Include information/quotes in weekly staff bulletin

* Have entire staff read and discuss Invitations using the small discussion group/staff meeting process established above.

* Form a building literacy group consisting of building administrator, primary and intermediate level teacher, specialist, and instructional assistant.

* Building literacy group will network with other literacy groups within the district.

2. **Second goal:** Develop a process to involve the staff in literacy goal setting.

Support strategies:

* Use small cross-grade level discussion groups to brainstorm and propose 2-4 possible building literacy goals.

* Identify building goal(s) through the TABA approach.

3. **Third goal:** Implement literacy goals by staff.

Support strategies:

* Establish teams of 3-5 staff members. Each team focuses on one goal/activity, one member from building literacy group per team

* Building literacy group will meet monthly to assess progress toward the literacy goals.

B. SUPPORT NEEDED FROM:

within the school:

Buy Transitions for new staff members.
Buy Invitations for entire staff members.
Allocate money to support literacy activities.

within the district:

TOSA, Colin Cameron, Debra Weiner, Val Just and elementary administrators and literacy groups

outside sources (name source as well as need):

Wright Group Inservice; NWREL Network, resource, consultants (Nancy Johnson and others); Other districts - network, support, visitations

C. TEAM CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND RELATED ACTIVITIES:

for each contribution, name of contributor, intended contribution, and date:

Diane Massey - BLG member, small group facilitator

Dick Pritchett - BLG member, small group facilitator, order Transitions by August 13th, order Invitations by September 1, information in weekly bulletin, identify BLG members by August 25, establish initial meeting date for BLG, contact Colin regarding networking with district groups

Erin Moran - BLG member, small group facilitator

D. INDICATE THE PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS SCHOOL TEAM MEMBERS KNOW ABOUT AND MIGHT BE ABLE TO ATTEND TO SUPPORT THEIR SCHOOL LITERACY IMPROVEMENT PLAN, I.E., LOCAL, STATE, AND REGIONAL CONFERENCES ON LITERACY. THE LABORATORY WILL ASSIST IN COORDINATING SUCH EVENTS. WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS ABOUT ACTIVITIES, WORKSHOPS, TOPICS YOU MIGHT WANT TO WORK ON AT SUCH GATHERINGS?

State Inservice Days
Reading Recovery
IRA
ASCD Conferences

BLG
..Meeting schedule for the year

WASCHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MC MINNVILLE, OREGON

SCHOOL LITERACY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

A. **GOALS AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES (INCLUDE DATES AND A BREAKDOWN OF SEPARATE STEPS FOR STRATEGIES IF APPROPRIATE)**

1. **First goal:** All teachers and support staff will learn how to instruct children in the reading strategies.

   Support strategies:

   A. Needs assessment from staff on reading as a process

      1. K W L (what do we know, what do we want, etc.)

   B. Read Invitations chapter on the reading process in order to come back and re-evaluate our reading beliefs

   C. Continue our staff development in writing as a process by using the writing chapters in Invitations

      1. Mini-workshop conducted by a trained writing teacher

2. **Second goal:** All teachers and support staff will learn appropriate language and literacy assessment tools (i.e., reading logs, running records, portfolios)

   Support strategies:

   A. Reading research and reading chapters in Invitations

   B. Implementing assessment strategies and sharing among the staff (i.e., what worked, what didn't, actual student samples)

   C. Will use outside consultants if dollars are available

3. **Third goal:** As part of our ongoing staff development, we will continue the peer coaching model and team building development.

   Support strategies:

   A. Teachers will coach the reading and/or writing as a process once a month.

   B. Group processing skills will be modeled and used at every team meeting.

B. SUPPORT NEED FROM: Kathy Baird and Annette DePuy (Institute Representatives)

within the school:

revolving facilitators of the Invitations and related articles

librarian

within the district:

Literacy Team	Colin Cameron (Curriculum Director)
Pam Tate (TOSA)	Deborah Weiner

outside sources (name source as well as need)

C. **TEAM CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND RELATED ACTIVITIES:**

for each contribution, name of contributor, intended contribution, and date:

This is woven throughout the goal statements

D. **INDICATE THE PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS SCHOOL TEAM MEMBERS KNOW ABOUT AND MIGHT BE ABLE TO ATTEND TO SUPPORT THEIR SCHOOL LITERACY IMPROVEMENT PLAN, I.E., LOCAL, STATE, AND REGIONAL CONFERENCES ON LITERACY. THE LABORATORY WILL ASSIST IN COORDINATING SUCH EVENTS. WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS ABOUT ACTIVITIES, WORKSHOPS, TOPICS YOU MIGHT WANT TO WORK ON AT SUCH GATHERINGS?**

* IRA Conference
* ASCD
* ORA (Oregon Reading Association)
* Western Reading Recovery Conference in February open to all teachers.
* NCTE (National Conference of Teachers of English)

Literacy Improvement Series for Elementary Educators

Expert practitioners from around the Northwest provide practical tips, hard-won insights, and research-based strategies for improving elementary literacy instruction in this popular NWREL series. These "hot topic" booklets will stimulate discussion among teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists. The series is designed to support the planning and implementation of change in school literacy programs.

A product of NWREL's Equity In Early Literacy Project, the series contains seven titles:

1 **Beginning a School Literacy Improvement Project: Some Words of Advice** *by Joanne Yatvin*

- Avoiding the jargon trap
- Supporting teachers as well as students in the change process
- Communicating with parents

2 **Promoting Developmentally Appropriate Practice Through Teacher Self-Study** *by Rebecca Severeide*

- Building a shared knowledge base among staff
- Learning from the experts among us
- Using outside resources

3 **Making Decisions About Grouping in Language Arts** *by Glenellen Pace*

- Using what we know about language and how it is learned
- Working with multiage, informal, and formalized grouping structures
- Designing classrooms that foster conversations

4 **Learning for life Through Universal Themes** *by Alba Stevens*

- Distinguishing between themes and topics
- Integrating curriculum content and learning experiences
- Developing universal theme units

5 **Celebrating Growth Over Time: Classroom-Based Assessment in Language Arts** *by Nancy Johnson*

- Matching assessment procedures to literacy goals
- Integrating assessment into instruction
- Adapting teacher-developed models for assessment and evaluation

6 **Improving the Literacy Program: A Journey Toward Integrated Curriculum** *by Carol Santa*

NEW!

- Developing a schoolwide literacy philosophy
- Deciding on target literacy behaviors
- Defining topics and themes of study

7 **Tensions to Resolve: Improving Literacy Programs in the Context of School Reform** *by Jane Braunger*

NEW!

- Fostering dialogue in the school community about significant literacy issues, including the role of standards, models of learning, and purposes of education
- Supporting students and teachers in inquiry-based learning with literacy
- Designing literacy programs that ensure equity and achieve excellence

Developed by NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY
Literacy, Language, and Communication Program

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Equity in Early Literacy Development

PROCESS STATUS REPORT
October 1994

What would you like us to include in the fall newsletter about your school's literacy program improvement process? Please mark sections of this report, add descriptions, and/or attach news stories, fliers, announcements, etc. Thank you!

Please complete as a team and return in the enclosed envelope to Jane Braunger by *October 14.* Attach additional sheets if you need more space for your responses.

Part I focuses on the *process* of your school literacy improvement plan, that is the experiences you and other staff are going through in implementing or adapting the SLIP you designed at the Summer Institute (copy attached). **Part II** asks about the actual *changes in instruction and other programs,* either planned or already occurring, which involve students, teachers, parents, and the community.

Part I: The School Literacy Improvement *Process*

1. Is literacy program improvement an important goal in your school this year? Or have other issues or areas taken center stage?

2. Since your spring 1994 PSR, has the Summer Institute team met? Has the composition of the team changed?

3. Have you accomplished some of the goals in your SLIP? Please describe. What new goals or directions are you pursuing this year?

4. Please list any plans for staff development that have grown out of your school literacy improvement plan. Examples might include:
-*individual efforts* (e.g., taking a course, observing in a colleague's classroom)
-*group activities* (e.g., reading/study group, committee formation)
-*whole staff activities* (e.g., visiting consultant, use of staff meeting time, in-service presentation related to literacy)

5. Has your school purchased any titles in the Literacy Improvement Series for Elementary Educators (purple booklets)? If so, please comment on their usefulness. Please also tell us any topics you'd like to see addressed in new titles in the series.

Part II: The School Literacy *Program*

1. Please specify student learning outcomes you are addressing in this year's plans..

2. Are your plans to improve your literacy program designed to address equity issues, e.g., disability, ethnicity, gender, language minority? If so, in what ways?

3. Are your plans designed to address the needs of a distressed community? If so, in what ways?

In which of the following areas of your school literacy program do you plan to direct your efforts this year?

Program Area	Not in the Plan	Some Effort	Major Effort
staffing patterns (e.g., use of specialists, team teaching)			
involvement of media center & specialist in literacy program			
teacher planning (e.g., time, collaboration)			
peer coaching among teachers			
literacy curriculum documents (e.g., mission statement, framework)			
teacher research projects			
school newsletter or bulletin			
thematic instruction			
multi-age grouping			
instructional materials (e.g., trade books, computers, media)			
instructional practices (e.g., developmentally appropriate practice)			
multi-cultural literacy			
language arts integration			
curriculum integration			
grade-level literacy outcomes or literacy stage descriptors			

Program Area	Not in the Plan	Some Effort	Major Effort
student-centered curriculum (e.g., inquiry-based learning)			
parent and community involvement in literacy program (e.g., classroom volunteers, curriculum night, conferences, homework help)			
business involvement in literacy program			
superintendent and school board support for literacy program			
developing and implementing alternative literacy assessments			
communication with parents about literacy assessment			
attention to equity issues (e.g., disability, ethnicity, gender, language minority) in designing assessment and using assessment data			
other (please specify):			

Don't forget to include or mark information for the newsletter. Thanks!

Name:_____ McMinnville School District Birthdate: _____

Reading Continuum

Band Pre A	Band A	Band B	Band C
• Curious about print • "Reads" pictures rather than print • Names a few letters • Recognizes print in familiar context ("McDonalds") • Relies on others to read text and joins in oral reading of familiar stories • Begins to recognize visual patterns • Identifies own name in print	• Wants to hear favorite stories repeatedly • Knows print carries meaning • Holds book correctly • Turn pages from front to back • Indicates start and end of stories • Matches upper & lower case letters • Understands concept of word, line, space, letter • Knows and uses letter names • Identifies familiar words in text • Shows preference for particular books	• "Reads" simple, patterned books • Uses picture clues • Consistently reads familiar words • Predicts words using meaning, structure and visual cues • Recognizes chunks such as /ing/, /th/, /ed/, etc • Recognizes small words within large words • Names basic parts of books (title, author, illustrations) • Attempts to self correct when reading does not make sense • Selects own books • Begins predicting what will happen next • Begins to use comprehension strategies such as cause and effect, sequencing, making connections to personal experience and retelling using main idea • Maintains independent reading for a short time • Initiates role plays or drawings to respond to a story • Begins to use multiple strategies to comprehend text: re-reading, cross-checking, prediction from context, phonetic clues, etc.	• Interprets simple maps, charts & graphs • Reads silently for a short time • Substitutes words with similar meanings when reading aloud • Uses multiple strategies to comprehend text: re-reading, cross-checking, prediction from context, phonetic clues, etc. • Uses punctuation marks for reading • Follows text when others are reading aloud • Follow-up activities reflect understanding of text • Reads known and predictable and other beginning books with growing confidence but still needs support with new and unfamiliar ones • Selects books at appropriate reading level • Sometimes chooses to read for pleasure

Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
• Reads silently for extended periods • Follows written instructions • States main idea of a paragraph • Can read chapter books • Can read a variety of materials for a variety of purposes • Uses vocabulary and sentence structure from a reading in their written work and conversation • Recommends reading materials to others • Can read at a normal pace in phrases and with expression • Is gaining understanding of elements of fiction, plot, characters and setting • Uses dictionaries, table of contents, index and glossaries • Uses text as model for own writing	• Gains understanding of point of view and theme • Recognizes inferences from text • Reads at different speeds, using scanning, skimming or careful reading as appropriate • Maps out story structure • Evaluates books making judgments, comparisons and analogies • Determines accuracy of information • Understands author's purpose and style • Recognizes and describes a range of genres • States and defends own interpretation of text	• Synthesizes information from more than one text • Interprets higher level maps, tables and graphs • Makes generalizations from reading • Supports argument or opinion by referring to evidence from text • Identifies opposing points of view • Identifies main and supporting arguments in text • Recognizes cohesiveness of text (relates elements) • Recognizes author's bias and technique • Breaks down and explains complex ideas from text • Identifies writer's sub-plot	• Compiles own list of needed references for research • Uses literature research techinques • Interprets material at different levels of meaning • Formulates hypothetical questions about text • Compares and offers critical analysis of materials presented in the media • Identifies ideas from complex passages of text • Identifies another author's point of view on a topic • Adapts research from available information • Understands opposing authors' views and styles • Identifies allegory	• Explains textual innuedo and undertone • Interprets and recognizes analogy and allegory in text • Identifies & explains deeper significances in the text

Name:_____ Birthdate: _____

Writing Continuum

Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D
• Draws writing • Scribbles as writing • Writes shapes that look like letters • Writes some letters and numbers • "Reads" and explains own writing	• Uses upper case letters most of the time • Writes letter strings • Begins to write some recognizable, understandable words • Attempts phonetic invented spelling (using consonant beginning and/or ending sounds) • Copies environmental print • Writes left to right/top to bottom • Begins to generate ideas to write about • Writes "all about" stories • Combines drawing with writing to convey ideas • Uses preferred hand consistently for writing • Can share what s/he has written	• Can use lower case letters • Begins to use vowels as place holders in inventive spelling • Uses some sight words • Represents most phonemes (letter sounds) in invented spelling • Begins to develop story sense • Consistently uses spaces between words • Can write multiple sentences, often pattern sentences • Can use capitals and punctuation • Sometimes chooses writing during free choice time • Begins to understand that writing can be revised; revision usually means "adding on"	• Begins to expand pattern sentences and/or writes original sentences • Represents one main idea or topic in writing stories • Writes multiple sentences • Uses detail to develop ideas • Organizes story with clear beginning/middle/end • Communicates her/his feelings to the reader • Begins to write with an audience in mind • Experiments with uncommon words/new and different ways of saying things • Writes clearly; piece is easy to understand • Often uses end space punctuation (.!?) and capitalization appropriately • Frequently uses conventional spelling • Chooses writing topics of interest to her/him • Can generally write on her/his own • Begins to revise writing after talking with others • Writes in different forms--poems, stories, lists, letters, etc. • Chooses topics with little difficulty • Indicates mispelled words when editing • Uses conjunctions in compound sentences

Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
• Stories contain characters from outside personal experience • Writes on a variety of topics • Edits own work to a point where others can read it; corrects common spelling errors, punctuation and grammatical errors • Develops ideas into paragraphs • Uses a dictionary, thesaurus, word checker to extend and check vocabulary • Uses [illegible] and complex sentence structure • Message in expository and persuasive writing can be identified by others but some information may be omitted • Consistently uses the correct verb tense • Uses appropriate vocabulary for familiar audiences such as peers, younger children or adults.	• Writes paragraphs to develop logical sequence of ideas • Corrects most spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in editing others' written work • Consults available sources to improve or enhance writing • Writes narratives with introduction, conflict and resolution in a logical order • Develops longer descriptions and narratives coherently • Uses strong "voice" • Uses complex sentences - principal and subordinate clauses • Demonstrates higher-level writing skills in areas of special interest • Understands the difference between narrative and other forms of writing • Completes standard forms requiring personal information	• Uses a range of writing styles effectively and appropriately for purpose, situation and audience • Uses a range of vocabulary effectively and appropriately for purpose, situation and audience • Edits work to improve the smooth flow of ideas and reorganizes work to make it more readable • Replaces words and sentences during revision of written work • Changes sequence of ideas, adds new ideas during revision • Presents main and supporting ideas clearly • Uses correct format for letters & invitations • Uses figurative language, such as simile, for descriptive purposes • Writing shows a range of styles - written conversations, poems, plays, journals, diaries • Distinguishes between formal and informal writing and the purposes for each • Adapts writing to the demands of the task • Completes complex forms which seek detailed biographical and related information	• Edits and revises own work to enhance effect of vocabulary, text organization and layout • Edits and revises others' writing, improving presentation and structure without losing meaning or message • Meaning is expressed precisely • Organization and layout of written text is accurate and appropriate for purpose, situation and audience • Argument, description and narrative are presented effectively and appropriately • Vocabulary shows awareness of ambiguities and shades of meaning • Figurative language, such as metaphor, is used to convey meaning • Presents analysis of argument and situation • Sustains organization of ideas which are justified with detail in extended writing.

Name:_____ Birthdate: _____

Speaking/Listening Continuum

Band Pre A

- Engages dialogues
- Assumes the role of another person in play
- Uses fillers to acknowledge partner's message, "uh-huh, yeah, OK"
- Begins code switching (using simpler language) when talking to very young children
- Request permission
- Begins using language for fantasies, jokes, teasing
- Makes conversational repairs when listener has not understood
- Corrects others
- Narrative development characterized by stories that have no sequence of events or central character
- Prefers playing with 2-3 children
- Asks "how, why, when" questions; asks for detailed explanations
- Answers "what if" questions
- Intelligible in connected speech
- "Because", "if", & "so" appear in sentences (cause & effect beginning to emerge)
- Responds within reasonable time to oral instructions in small group
- Maintains eye contact and attentive body posture toward speaker
- Makes verbal comments during play or other activities with concrete objects

Band A

- Listens attentively to stories, songs, poems
- Reacts to stories, poems, songs heard in class (smiles, comments)
- Joins in familiar songs, poems, chants
- Allows others to speak without unnecessary interruption
- Waits for an appropriate turn to speak
- Offers personal opinion in discussion
- Speaks fluently to the class
- Follows instructions and directions
- Attends to explanations
- Connects phrases and clauses by using "and", "and then", "but"
- Speaks at a rate which enables others to follow
- Speaks at a volume appropriate to the situation
- Responds within a reasonable time to oral instructions in a large group
- Uses listening and visual skills to consistently follow classroom routine

Band B

- Makes short announcements clearly
- Tells personal anecdotes in small group discussion
- Retells a story heard in class, preserving the sequence of events
- Accurately conveys a verbal message to another person
- Responds with facial expressions
- Responds with talk when others initiate conversation
- Initiates conversation with peers
- Holds conversation with familiar adults
- Asks what unfamiliar words mean
- Uses talk to clarify ideas or experience
- Reacts (smiles, laughs, etc.) to absurd word substitutions
- Demonstrates an appreciation of wit
- Reacts (smiles, laughs) to unusual features of language (such as rhythm, alliteration or onomatopoeia)
- Listens attentively for information
- Listens attentively for enjoyment

Band C

- Tells personal anecdote, illustrating in a relevant way the issue being discussed
- Recounts a story or repeats a song spontaneously
- Retells scenes from film or drama
- Offers predictions about what will come next
- Recites poems
- Asks questions in conversation
- Has a second try at something to make it more precise
- Uses range of vocabulary related to a particular topic

Band D

- Speaks confidently in formal situations (eg. assembly, report to the class)
- Explains ideas clearly in discussion
- Discusses information heard (dialogue, news item, report)
- Based on consideration of what has already been said, offers personal opinions
- Asks for repetition, restatement, or general explanation to clarify meaning
- Sequences a presentation in a logical order
- Gives instructions in a concise and understandable manner
- Reads aloud with expression, showing awareness of rhythm and tone
- Modulates voice for effect
- Nods, looks at speaker when others initiate talk

Band E

- Presents point of view clearly to a large group
- Presents material with consideration for audience needs
- Thinks of and offers new ideas or suggestions
- Uses logic, argument, or appeals to feelings to persuade others
- Explores concepts related to concrete materials by describing, narrating, or explaining how things work and why things happen
- Dramatizes familiar stories or situations showing understanding
- Invites other group members to participate
- Takes initiative in raising new aspects of an issue
- Asks questions to elicit more from an individual
- Answers questions confidently and clearly in interviews
- Asks for the meaning of familiar words used in unfamiliar ways
- Makes links between ideas in a discussion
- Uses complex connectives in speech ("although", "unless", "so that")
- Uses vocabulary appropriate to audience and purpose
- Distinguishes between words of similar meaning
- Uses new words from reading

Speaking/Listening Continuum (cont)

Band F	Band G	Band H
• Asks speaker to clarify ambiguities • Elicits information, reaction, or opinions from others in conversation • Asks questions to draw information from the group • Indicates disagreement in a constructive manner • Attempts to resolve disagreement or misunderstanding • Supports constructively the statements of others • Attempts to keep discussion on the topic • Makes formal introductions with courtesy and clarity • Tells a story with expression and emphasis showing confidence, highlighting key points and demonstrating the storyteller's art • Explores abstract ideas (justice, good and evil) by generalizing, hypothesizing or inferring • Uses a range of idiomatic expressions with confidence • Reacts to inappropriate choice of words	• Asks interview questions that are relevant • Extends another group member's contribution by elaboration or illustration • Helps others to put forward ideas • Summarizes the conclusions reached in group discussion • T kes initiative in moving the discussion to the next stage • Reflects and evaluates discussion ("What have we learned? How did we do it?") • Asks speaker for background information • Dramatizes scenes from complex stories showing understanding of dramatic structure • Talks or writes about the moral of a story that has been heard • Uses new words spontaneously • Varies tone, pitch, pace of speech to create effect and aid communication • Self-corrects to remove effects upon audience of poor word choice	• Experiments with and reflects on possible readings and interpretations of a piece of scripted drama • Sustains coherent argument in formal presentation • Holds conversation with less familiar adults (guest speaker) • Attempts special forms of language such as accents or dialects in own written dialogue • Defines or explains words to cater to audiene needs • Comments on bias or point of view in spoken language • Analyzes factors that contribute to the success, or not, of discussion

Band I	
• Makes effective use of visual or other materials to illustrate ideas • Capitalizes on opportunities offered by responses to interview questions • Asks interview questions designed to elicit extended responses • Talks or writes about subtle effects of dialogue between characters in film or drama • Comments on tone, attitude or emphasis of speech • Talks about quality of speech such as loudness, pitch, pronunciation, articulation and dialect Uses pun and double meaning	

Acknowledgements:

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Bainbridge Island, Washington

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Juneau, Alaska 99801

School Programs Division
Ministry of Educationa nd Training
Victoria, Australia, 1991

Toward New and Higher Learning Standards

The Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century calls for a transformation of what and how students learn. Oregon's new learning standards will assure that young people are prepared for an increasingly diverse and complex society and for the high performance work environments of the next century.

Students who earn a Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) will have attained new, higher standards within a common core of learning. The State Board of Education has endorsed the set of outcomes proposed by the CIM Task Force (see the following page). While the CIM outcomes set uniform performance standards for all students statewide, local districts are encouraged to design programs that prepare their students to meet the standards.

The CIM outcomes emphasize useful knowledge and complex applications matched to real world demands. Successful learners must have a broad base of knowledge and skills. They must know how to tap a variety of subject areas to find solutions and workable strategies. Acquisition of this ability is one of the central purposes of the CIM program.

The CIM is based on cumulative learning that takes place from kindergarten through approximately grade 10, and will include benchmark assessments along the way. Most students will earn a CIM about age 16.

An appropriate student performance will present integrated and applied learning. While there will be one standard for all students, the school system owes extra support to special populations to assure that they have equal opportunities to reach the standard. In some cases special needs students will use modified means to demonstrate mastery.

For more information contact:
21st Century Schools Council
373-7118

21st CENTURY SCHOOLS Oregon

Oregon Department of Education
Salem, OR 97310

Norma Paulus, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Certificate of Initial Mastery Outcomes

To attain the Certificate of Initial Mastery, a student will demonstrate the ability to:

Foundation Skills	Think	critically, creatively and reflectively in making decisions and solving problems.
	Self-Direct Learning	direct his or her own learning, including planning and carrying out complex projects.
	Communicate	communicate through reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and through an integrated use of visual forms such as symbols and graphic images.
	Use Technology	use current technology, including computers, to process information and produce high-quality products.
	Quantify	recognize, process, and communicate quantitative relationships.
	Collaborate	participate as a member of a team, including providing leadership for achieving goals and working well with others from diverse backgrounds.
Core Applications for Living	Deliberate on Public Issues	deliberate on public issues which arise in our representative democracy and in the world by applying perspectives from the social sciences.
	Understand Diversity	understand human diversity and communicate in a second language, applying appropriate cultural norms.
	Interpret Human Experience	interpret human experience through literature and the fine and performing arts.
	Apply Science and Math	apply science and math concepts and processes, showing an understanding of how they affect our world.
	Understand Positive Health Habits	understand positive health habits and behaviors that establish and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships.

NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) provides leadership, expertise, and services of the highest quality, based on research and development, for systemic changes which result in improvement of educational outcomes for children, youth, and adults in schools and communities throughout the region.

Board of Directors

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